THE LADY WITH THE CAMELIAS

Alexandre Dumas (1824-1895), son of Dumas the novelist, was born at Paris. He was admitted to the French Academy in 1874.

This is the work by which Dumas first established his fame. "It is perhaps the most audacious piece of immoral work in existence. The heroine is a prostitute, who, while following her avocation, continues (in a manner known only to French novelists) to keep up a pure and unsullied affection for an young gentleman, who is a compound of cowardice, mean-mindedness, imbecility, and lust." Chamb. Encyc. The novel was produced in 1848.

RB77324

Library

of the

University of Toronto

THE

LADY WITH THE CAMELIAS

(ON WHICH IS FOUNDED THE OPERA OF "LA TRAVIATA.")

BY

ALEXANDRE DUMAS.

LONDON:

CHARLES HENRY CLARKE,

3 WARWICK LANE.

INTRODUCTION.

MADEMOISELLE MARIE DUPLESSIS.

In the year of grace 1845—in those years of abundance and peace when all the favours of wit and talent, of beauty and fortune, surrounded that France of a day—there lived a young and beautiful person, possessing the most charming face, and, by her mere presence, attracting a certain admiration mingled with deference from any one who, seeing her for the first time, knew neither her name nor her profession. She had, in truth, and in the most natural manner, the ingenuous look, the deceptive gesture, and the bearing, bold and decent at the same time, of a woman of the highest rank. Her countenance was serious and her smile imposing; and, merely from seeing her walk, any one might have said of her what Elleviou said one day of a lady of the court, "That is evidently either a courtesan or a duchess!"

Alas! she was not a duchess; she had been born at the bottom of the difficult ladder, and she must indeed have been beautiful and charming to have ascended with so light a step the first rounds by the time she was eighteen, which was about her age at that period. I remember meeting her for the first time, one day, in an abominable saloon of a theatre of the Boulevards, badly lighted, and filled with that humming

crowd which generally judges grand spectacular melodramas. There were more blouses than coats present, more round caps than plumed bonnets, and more threadbare paletots than fresh costumes; the conversation turned upon everything—on the dramatic art and fried potatoes; on the pieces of the Gymnase and on the cake of the Gymnase; but when this young woman appeared on the strange threshold, it seemed as if she illuminated all these burlesque or savage objects with a glance of her fine eye. She touched the muddy floor with her foot, as if she were traversing the Boulevards on a rainy day; she raised her gown instinctively, in order not to sweep the dried-up mire, and without thinking of showing us—for what would have been the good?—her well-shod foot, which was attached to a well-rounded leg, covered by a silk stocking with small pattern open-work. The whole of her toilet was in keeping with her young and supple form, and her face, of a beautiful oval shape, corresponded with the grace she diffused around her, like an indescribable perfume.

She entered the saloon, then; she traversed, with head erect, the astonished and motley crowd. Liszt and myself were very much surprised when she came and sat down familiarly on the bench where we were, for neither he nor I had ever spoken to her. She was a person of wit, taste, and good sense, and she immediately addressed the great artist. She informed him that she had once heard him, and that he had set her dreaming. Like those sonorous instruments which reply to the first breath of the breeze in May, he, on his side, listened with uninterrupted attention to her beautiful language, which was full of ideas—which was, at the same time, eloquent and pensive. With that marvellous instinct inherent to him, and his great experience of the highest official world, as well as of the highest world among artists, he kept questioning himself who this woman could be, who was so familiar and so dignified, who

spoke to him the first, and who, after the first few words had been exchanged, treated him with a certain *hauteur*, as if it had been he who had been presented to her, in London, at a party given by the Queen or the Duchess of Sutherland.

Meanwhile, the three solemn knocks of the prompter had resounded in the theatre, and the saloon had been deserted by all its crowd of spectators and judges. The unknown lady had alone remained with her companion and ourselves; she had even gone up to the fire, and placed her two shivering feet near the miserly logs, so that we could see her with the greatest ease, from the embroidered folds of her petticoat to the curls of her black hair; her gloved hand, which made you think you were looking at a picture; her handkerchief marvellously ornamented with royal lace; and in her ears two pearls of the East which might have rendered a queen jealous. She wore all these beautiful objects as if she had been born in silk and velvet, under some gilded ceiling of the grand Faubourgs, with a crown upon her head, and a world of flatterers at her feet. Thus her bearing tallied with her language, and you would have searched in vain, in the very highest circles of the world, for a being in more beautiful and more complete harmony with her ornaments, her dress, and her conversation.

Liszt, however, greatly astonished at this marvel in such a place, and at this incident between the acts of so terrible a melodrama, gave the reins to his fancy. He is not only a great artist, but, moreover, an eloquent man. He knows how to talk to women, passing, like them, from one idea to another, and choosing the most opposite ones. He adores what is paradoxical; he touches on the serious and the burlesque; and it would be impossible for me to describe with what art, what taste, and what infinite tact, he ran through, with this woman, of whom he did not know even the name, all the vulgar gamut and all the elegant *fioriture* of everyday conversation.

They talked in this manner during all the third act of the melodrama before mentioned; for as to myself, I was hardly addressed once or twice out of politeness; but as I happened to be in one of those fits of bad humour, when every kind of enthusiasm is prohibited to the human soul, I am convinced that the lady thought me perfectly dull and perfectly absurd, and that she was completely right.

That winter passed, and then the summer, when, the next autumn, once again—only this time in all the splendour of a benefit at the Opera in all its glory—we suddenly saw the door of one of the grand boxes of the *avant-scène* opened with a certain degree of noise, and, advancing to the front of the box, with a bouquet in her hand, the same beauty I had met on the Boulevard. It was she!—but, on this occasion, in the grand costume of a woman who is the fashion, and brilliant with all the splendours of conquest. Her head was ravishingly dressed her beautiful hair being mingled with diamonds and flowers, and raised with that studied grace which imparted to it movement and life; her arms and bosom were bare, and she had necklaces, bracelets, and emeralds. In her hand she held a bouquet. Of what colour? I cannot say. You must have the eyes of a young man and the imagination of a child to distinguish accurately the colour of the flower over which a beautiful face is bent. At our age, a man only looks at the cheek and the brilliancy of the glance; he troubles his head very little about the accessories, and if he amuses himself with making deductions, he does so from the person herself, and finds, in truth, that he has quite enough to do.

On the evening in question, Duprez had just entered the lists with that rebellious voice, of whose definitive acts of revolt he already had a presentiment; but he was the only person who had, and the public, as yet, never suspected them. Only among the most attentive part of the

audience, a few amateurs divined the artist's fatigue under his skill, and his exhaustion under his immense efforts to deceive himself. The beautiful person of whom I am speaking was evidently a skilful judge, and, after attending for the first few minutes, it was plain she was not under the influence of the usual charm, for she threw herself violently back in her box, and, as she was no longer listening, began to interrogate, with her opera-glass in her hand, the physiognomy of the house.

Most assuredly she was acquainted with a great many of the most select spectators. From the mere movement of her glass, you felt that the beautiful spectatress could have told more than one story concerning young men bearing the most distinguished names; she directed her glass first here and then there, without choice, or bestowing more attention in one case than another, and indifferent to all, while every one repaid her by a smile, a very short little gesture, or a sharp and rapid glance, the attention she had accorded him. From the back of the obscure boxes and the midst of the stalls, other glances, fiery as volcanoes, were cast towards her; but these she did not see. Lastly, if by chance her glass embraced within its scope the ladies of the real Parisian world, there was suddenly in her attitude a certain indescribable air of resignation and humiliation which excited pity. On the contrary, she turned her head away with bitterness, if, unfortunately, her glance happened to alight on any one of those doubtful reputations and charming heads, which usurp the best stalls of the theatre on grand occasions.

Her companion, for this time she had a cavalier with her, was a handsome young man, half a Parisian, and still preserving some opulent relics of the paternal house, which he had come to squander, acre by acre, in the city of perdition. The young man, at his dawn, was proud of this beauty in her apogee, and he was not sorry to increase his own importance

by showing that she was really his, and by besieging her with those thousand marks of attention so dear to a young creature when they come from the man she loves, and so displeasing when they are addressed to a soul otherwise occupied. She listened to him without hearing him; she looked at him without seeing him. What did he say? The lady had no idea; but she endeavoured to answer, and these few words, which contained no meaning, fatigued her.

Thus, without their knowing it, they were not alone in the box, the price of which represented the bread of a family for six months. Between her and her companion, was seated the assiduous companion of diseased souls, of wounded hearts, and of minds which have exhausted every resource; ennui, that immense Mephistopheles of the wandering Marguerites, of the lost Clarissas, of all those divinities, daughters of Chance, who have wandered through life to be abandoned at last.

This fair sinner, surrounded by the adorations and the homage of youth, was, then, a victim to ennui, and this very ennui ought to serve as her pardon and excuse, since it was the chastisement of her fleeting moments of prosperity. Ennui was the great evil of her life. From the habit of seeing her affections crushed, from the habit of obeying the necessity of ephemeral *liaisons*, and passing from one love to another, without knowing, alas! why she smothered so quickly a partiality but just born, and her feelings of tenderness at their very dawn, she had become indifferent to all things, forgetting the love of yesterday, and scarcely any longer thinking more of the love of to-day than of the passion of to-morrow.

Unfortunate being! She had need of solitude, and she was besieged! She had need of silence, and she constantly heard, without ending or cessation, the same words in her fatigued ears! She desired to be calm, and she was dragged into *fetes*

and tumult! She would have wished to be loved!—and she was told she was beautiful! She abandoned herself, therefore, without resistance, to the vortex which was swallowing her up. What a youth! How well we can understand the words of Mademoiselle de L'Enclos, when, after having reached the summit of her prosperity, which resembled a fable; after becoming the friend of the Prince de Condé and Madame de Maintenon, she said, with a profound sigh of regret,—"Had anyone proposed such a life to me, I should have died of fright and grief!"

At the conclusion of the opera, the beautiful young creature left: the performance was scarcely half over. The audience were awaiting Bouffé, Mademoiselle Déjazet, and the mimes of the Palais Royal, not to mention the ballet, in which Carlotta, light and charming, in her first days of intoxication and poetry, was to dance. She would not stop for the vaudeville; she wanted to leave at once, and return home, when so many people had still three hours of pleasure, to the sound of the music, and under the flaming chandeliers.

I saw her come out of her box, and wrap herself up in a cloak lined with the fur of a precocious ermine. The young man who had brought her appeared out of temper, and, as he had no longer to deck himself out with her, no longer cared whether she was cold. I even recollect having assisted her to raise her mantle on her shoulder, which was very white, and that she looked at me without recognising me, with a little mournful smile, which she transferred to the tall young man, who, at that moment, was engaged in paying the woman who opened the boxes, and in making her change a five-franc piece. "Keep it all, Madame," said she to the woman, making her a gracious bow. I saw her descend the grand staircase on the right, her white robe standing out against her red mantle, and her handkerchief fastened round her head and under her

chin; the jealous lace fell a little over her eyes, but what did that matter! The lady had played her part; her day was ended, and she no longer thought of being beautiful. That evening she left, no doubt, the young man at her door.

There is one thing worthy of remark, and altogether to her credit: this young creature, who, in the hours of her youth, scattered gold and silver around her by handfuls—for she united caprice with benevolence, and valued little the mournful money which cost her so dear—was never the heroine of any of those tales of ruin and scandal, of gambling, debts, and duels, to which so many women, in her place, would have given rise during their career. On the contrary, people around her spoke only of her beauty, of her triumphs, of her taste for elegant apparel, of the fashions she invented, and of those which she imposed. People never spoke, in connection with her, of fortunes which had disappeared, of imprisonment for debt, or of acts of treachery, the ordinary accompaniments of tenebrous love; and there certainly was around this individual, snatched away so soon by death, a certain good conduct, a certain irresistible propriety. She lived apart, even in the world which she inhabited, and in a calmer and more serene region; although, everything considered, alas! she inhabited those regions where everything is lost.

I saw her, a third time, at the inauguration of the "Chemin de Fer du Nord," on the occasion of the *fetes* given by Brussels to France, who had become her neighbour and companion. At the terminus, the immense trysting-place of all the railroads of the North, Belgium had collected every possible splendour; the shrubs of her hothouses, the flowers of her gardens, and the diamonds of her crowns. An incredible multitude of uniforms, cordons, diamonds and gauze robes encumbered the scene of the *fete*, the like of which we shall never behold again. The French peerage and the German

nobility, Spanish Belgium, and Flanders and Holland, decked out in its ancient jewels, contemporary with King Louis XIV. and his court, all the heavy and massive fortunes of trade, and numbers of elegant Parisiennes, resembling so many butterflies in a hive of bees, had hastened to this *fete* of industry and travelling, of tamed iron, and flame obeying vanquished time. It was a strange medley, where every kind of force and grace in creation were represented, from oaks to flowers, from coals to amethysts. In the midst of this moving mass of the peoples, of the kings, of the princes, the smiths, and the great coquettes of Europe, there was seen to appear, or, rather, I alone saw appear, paler and whiter even than usual, our charming friend, already struck by the invisible malady destined to drag her to the tomb.

She had gained admission to the ball in spite of her name, by the aid of her dazzling beauty! She attracted every glance, and was followed by the homage of all present. A flattering murmur greeted her as she passed along, and even those who knew her bowed before her; while she, as calm as she always was, and entrenched in her habitual disdain, accepted all these marks of homage as though they were her due. She was not astonished, far from it, at treading on carpets on which the Queen herself had trodden! More than one prince stopped to contemplate her, and his looks gave her to understand that which women understand so well:—"I think you are beautiful, and it is with regret that I leave you!" That evening she gave her arm to another stranger, to a new-comer, as blonde as a German, and impassible as an Englishman, elaborately got-up, greatly pinched in by his coat, very stiff, and thinking he was committing, at that moment, as we could see by his bearing, one of those daring acts without a name for which men reproach themselves to their dying day.

This person's demeanour was displeasing to the sensitive

creature on his arm; she felt it with that sixth sense which was within her, and she redoubled her haughtiness, for her marvellous instinct told her that the more this man was astonished at his action, the more insolent ought she herself to be on account of it, and trample contemptuously under foot the remorse of her affrighted companion. Very few persons understood what she must have suffered at that moment—she, a woman without a name, on the arm of a man without a name, who appeared to manifest marks of disapprobation, while his menacing demeanour sufficiently indicated an unquiet soul, an undecided heart, and a mind ill at ease. But this Anglo-German was cruelly punished for his inward pangs, when, at the turn of a broad path of light and verdure, our fair Parisian met a friend of her own, a friend without pretention, one who begged of her, from time to time, a finger of her hand, and a smile from her lips, an artist of our world, a painter who knew better than anyone else, having seen so little of her, to what a degree she was a perfect model of every elegance and every seduction of youth.

"Ah, there you are!" she said to him; "give me your arm, and let us have a dance." Leaving the official arm of her cavalier, she began waltzing the *Valse à Deux Temps*, which is seduction itself, when it obeys the inspiration of Strauss, and comes, all enamoured, from the banks of the German Rhine, its true country! She danced marvellously, neither too lively nor too much bent, obeying the cadence within her as much as the visible measure, scarcely touching with a light foot the elastic ground, bounding on, yet still calm, and keeping her eyes fixed on the eyes of her partner. A circle was formed round both of them, and everyone strove to be touched by her beautiful hair, which followed the movement of the rapid valse, and everyone strove to graze her light robe, tinged with light perfumes; and, the circle gradually

growing more and more narrow, and the other dancers stopping to look at them, it came to pass that the tall young man—he who had brought her to the ball—lost her in the crowd, and endeavoured in vain to find that charming arm to which he had given his own with such repugnance. But the arm, the young person, and the artist, were not to be found.

Two days after this fête, the weather being very beautiful, she came from Brussels to Spa, at the hour when the verdure-clad mountains allow the sun to penetrate—delicious hour! You then see all kinds of happy invalids assemble, coming to repose after the fêtes of the past winter, in order to be better prepared for the joys of the winter which is to come. At Spa, no other fever is known than the ball-fever, no other languor than that of absence, and no other remedies than talking, dancing, and music, and the excitement of gambling, in the evening, when the Redoute is lighted up in all its brightness, and the echo of the mountains returns in a thousand bursts the intoxicating sounds of the orchestra. At Spa, the fair Parisian was welcomed with an eagerness somewhat uncommon in this rather prudish village, that willingly gives up to Baden, its rival, beautiful persons without a name, without a husband, and without a recognised position. At Spa, too, the astonishment was general, when people were informed that so young a creature was seriously ill, and when the medical men sorrowfully confessed that in sober truth they had rarely met more resignation conbined with greater courage.

A most careful and most zealous inquiry was made into the state of her health, and, after a grave consultation, she was recommended calm, repose, sleep, and silence, those beautiful dreams of her life! To this recommendation, she replied by smiling and nodding her head with a little air of incredulity, for she knew that everything was possible for her, except the possession of those chosen hours which are the lot of certain

women, and belong to them alone. She promised, however, to obey for a few days, and to subject herself to this regimen of isolation! But her efforts were in vain! A short time afterwards she was seen intoxicated and mad with fictitious joy, clearing, on horseback, the most difficult passes, and astounding by her gaiety the alley of *Sept Heures*, which had seen her pensive and reading under its trees.

She soon became the lioness of this beautiful place. She presided at all the fêtes; she set the ball going; she imposed her favourite airs upon the orchestra, and, when night had come, at the hour when a little sleep would have done her so much good, she terrified the most intrepid gamblers by the masses of gold which rose before her, and which she lost at a single stake, indifferent to gain and indifferent to loss. She had summoned gambling to her aid as an appendix to her profession, as a means of killing those hours which were killing her. Such as she was, however, she had moreover the good fortune, in the cruel game of her life, of preserving her friends, a rare circumstance! It is one of the signs of these fatal connections that they leave only dust and ashes, vanity and nothingness, after adoration! How many times has the lover passed his mistress without recognising her? and how many times has the unfortunate being cried, but in vain, for help? How many times has the hand dedicated to flowers been stretched out in vain for alms and for dry bread!

This was not the case with our heroine. She fell without complaining, and, when fallen, found aid, support, and protection, among the passionate adorers of her happy days. The men who had been rivals, and perhaps enemies, arranged with one another to watch by the patient's pillow, to expiate nights of folly by nights of earnestness, when death approached, when the curtain was torn asunder, and when the victim, stretched out on her couch, and her paramour, at last understood the

truth of those serious words *Væ Ridentibus!* Woe to those who laugh! Woe! That is to say, woe to profane pleasures, woe to vagrant love, woe to changing passions, woe to youth which loses itself in evil ways, for, at certain turns of the road, it is obliged to retrace its steps and fall into those abysses into which we fall at twenty.

In this manner she died, gently cradled, and consoled by a thousand touching words, by a thousand acts of brotherly attention; she had no longer any lovers—she had never had so many friends, and yet she did not regret life. She knew what awaited her if she was restored to health, and that she would be obliged again to carry to her discoloured lips the cup of pleasure, to the dregs of which she had come before the proper time. She died then in silence, concealing herself even more in death than she had rendered herself public in life; and, after so much luxury and so much scandal, she had the supreme good taste to desire that she might be buried at break of day, in some hidden and solitary place, without fuss, and without noise, absolutely like the honest mother of a family, who might go to rejoin her husband, her father, her mother, her children, and all she loved, in the cemetery.

In spite of her, however, her death proved a kind of event; people talked about it for three days, which is a great deal in this city of learned passions and of fêtes continually renewed and never satisfied. At the expiration of three days, the door of her house was opened. The long windows looking out upon the Boulevards, opposite the church of the Madeleine, her patron Saint, again allowed the air and sun to penetrate within the walls where she had expired. You would have said the young creature was about to re-appear in the place. Not a single odour of death had remained between the curtains, between the long drapery, with its becoming reflections, or on

the Gobelin carpets, where the flowers had seemed to blow, scarcely touched by her child-like foot.

Every piece of furniture of these sumptuous apartments was in perfect order, and in its proper place; the bed in which she died was scarcely depressed. At its head, a stool still retained the impression of the knees of him who had closed her eyes. That clock of former times, which had struck the hour for Madame de Pompadour and Madame Dubarry, still struck the hour, as before; the silver candelabra were filled with tapers, prepared for the last evening chat; in the flower-stands, the monthly rose and the lasting heath were struggling in their turn with death: they were dying for the want of a little water—their mistress had died for the want of a little happiness and hope.

Alas! round the walls were suspended the pictures of Diaz, whom she had been one of the first to adopt as the real painter of the spring of the year, and her portrait, which Vidal had drawn in three chalks. Vidal had made of her beautiful head a ravishing and chaste head, of finished elegance; and, since this goddess is dead, he will only draw honest women, having made in her favour an exception, which served so well the rising reputation of the painter and the model!

Everything still spoke of her! The birds were singing in their gilded cage; in the Buhl cabinets, through the transparent glass, you beheld an admirable collection, worthy of an excellent and wealthy antiquary; the rarest *chefs d'œuvre* of Sèvres manufacture, the most exquisite paintings of Saxony, the enamels of Petitot, the nudes of Klinstadt, and the Pampines of Boucher. She was fond of this little coquettish art, where even vice has its wit and innocence its nudity; she liked shepherds and shepherdesses in biscuit-china, Florentine bronzes, terra-cotta ornaments, enamels, in fact, all the results

of the taste and luxury of states of society now worn out. She saw in them so many emblems of her beauty and her life! Alas! she also—she was a useless ornament, a mere article of fancy, a frivolous plaything, which breaks at the first shock, the brilliant product of an expiring state of society, a bird of passage, the aurora of an instant.

She had carried the science of domestic comfort and self-adoration to such a pitch, that nothing could be compared to her clothes, her linen, and the smallest details of everything connected with her, for the decoration of her beauty was, after all, the dearest and most charming occupation of her youth.

I have heard the first ladies and the most skilful coquettes in Paris express their astonishment at the art and exquisite nature of the smallest articles of her toilette-table. Her comb was sent up to a fabulous price; her hairbrush was purchased for its weight in gold. Gloves which had been worn by her were sold, so beautiful was her hand. The boots she had worn were sold, and honest women contended with each other to see who should put on her Cinderella-like shoe. Everything was sold, even her oldest shawl, which had been three years in use, as well as her brilliant plumaged bird, which repeated a somewhat sad little melody, which its mistress had taught it; her portraits were sold, her love-letters were sold, her horses were sold; everything shared the same fate, and her family, who looked away when she drove by in her carriage with its armorial bearings, and with its galloping English horses, gorged themselves triumphantly with all the gold which these relics produced. Out of respect for themselves, they kept nothing which had belonged to her. Chaste people!

Such was this woman, who stood apart, even among Parisian passions; and the reader may judge my astonishment at the appearance of the book, of such vivid interest, and especially of such truth, so recent and so young, entitled "La Dame aux

Camélias." People spoke of it at first as they usually speak of pages bearing the stamp of sincere emotion and of youth, and everyone delighted in saying, that the son of Alexander Dumas, scarcely escaped from college, was already following, with a steady step, in the brilliant track of his father. He possessed his father's vivacity and inward emotion; he had his lively, rapid style, with a little of that dialogue, so natural, so easy, and so varied, which lends the romances of this great inventor the charm, the accents, and the style of comedy.

Thus the book obtained a great success, but, soon afterwards, the readers, returning to the fugitive impression it had produced, observed that "La Dame aux Camélias" was not a romance attributable to mere chance; that this woman must have lived, and recently too; that this drama was not a drama invented at the whim of the author, but a domestic tragedy, the representation of which was most true and most real. They then were very anxious about the name of the heroine, about her position in the world, and about the fortunes, the ornament, and the report of her amours. The public, who desire to know everything, and who always finish by doing so, learned all these details, one after the other, and, having read the book, felt a desire to read it again, and it naturally came to pass that the truth, being known, was reflected upon the interest of the narrative.

This is how it has come to pass that the present book, printed with the carelessness of a futile romance, hardly destined to live a day, is now reprinted with all the honours of a work accepted by everyone! Read it, and you will recognise in its minutest details the touching story of which this young man, so felicitously gifted, has written the elegy and the drama, with so many tears, with so much success and happiness.

JULES JANIN.

THE LADY WITH THE CAMELIAS.

CHAPTER I.

I HAVE always considered, that, to create imaginary personages, one must have deeply studied mankind; as, in order to speak a language, it is necessary to have learned it with care.

Not having yet attained the age of invention, I content myself with simple narration.

I beg the reader, therefore, to believe in the reality of the present story, of which all the characters, except the heroine, are actually living at this moment.

There are also, in Paris, witnesses of the greater part of the facts which I have placed on record; and whose testimony can be added to my own, should the latter be deemed insufficient.

Owing, however, to an accidental and personal circumstance, only myself possess the essentials for writing this narrative; because, to me alone were confided those final details, without which it would be impossible to render the tale either interesting or complete.

These details reached me in the following manner:—

On the 12th of March, 1847, in passing through the Rue de Lallitte, I observed a large placard, announcing a grand

sale of furniture and effects of a rich and curious description, belonging to a person lately deceased. The placard did not *name* the person to whom the property had belonged; but announced that the sale would take place at No. 9, Rue d'Antin, on the 16th instant, from twelve until five o'clock.

It was farther stated, that the articles would be "on view" at the above address, on the 13th and 14th.

I have always been an amateur of curiosities in furniture, and the like, and I resolved not to lose this opportunity, if not of buying, at least of examining the articles thus advertised.

The next day I bent my steps toward No. 9, Rue d'Antin.

Although it was still early, the apartments were already filled with visitors, both male and female, who, though clad in velvet, wrapped in cashmeres, and with costly equipages in attendance at the door, gazed with astonishment and admiration upon the luxury and magnificence by which they found themselves surrounded.

I soon discovered, however, the cause of some portion of the astonishment thus manifested; for after a brief inspection, I had no difficulty in ascertaining that the apartments had belonged to one of those ladies who occupy so prominent a position in the gay world of Paris; and whose "establishments," as well as themselves, are under the maintenance and "protection" of some gentleman or gentlemen, who do not sustain the relation of either husband, father, or brother, to the fair *protegée*.

Now, if there be a thing in the world, which the women of the world—the women of high society—are wild with curiosity to inspect, it is the internal arrangements of the establishments of ladies of the class above named, whose dashing equipages daily jostle their own, who have like them, and side-by-side with them, their box at the Opera or the Théâtre Italien, and who display throughout the most brilliant scenes of Paris, the insolent opulence of their beauty, their jealousy, and their intrigues.

She in whose house we now stood, was dead. The most

virtuous women could therefore penetrate fearlessly to her very bed-chamber. Death had purified the air of this splendid mansion of vice; and besides, there was the excuse (were one needful) of attending a public sale, without of necessity being aware to whom the house had belonged.

They had read the advertisements, and were desirous to see the things which those advertisements promised, and to make choice in advance of such as they might choose to buy. Nothing could be more simple:—but it did not prevent their seeking with eager curiosity, amid these marvels of luxury, for the mysterious traces of that private life of the "lady under protection," respecting which they had heard so much, and conjectured so much more.

Unhappily the "mystery," if any had existed, had died with the goddess of the temple; and despite their goodwill thereto, these ladies could detect only what there was to be sold since the death, and nothing of what might have been purchasable during the life-time, of the occupant.

There remained, however, ample scope for purchases. The furniture was superb. Articles in rosewood and buhl, vases of Sevres and China, services of plate, statuettes, satins, velvets, laces—nothing was wanting.

I walked through the apartments, following the noble inquisitives who had preceded me. They entered an apartment with hangings of Persian stuff, and I was on the point of entering also, when they came suddenly out again, smiling mysteriously, and as if their modesty had been somewhat shocked by this last object of inspection. This only increased my desire to penetrate into the apartment. I did so. It was a dressing-room, furnished in its minutest details; and in which the luxurious prodigality of the deceased seemed to have attained its climax.

Upon a large table, placed against the wall,—a table some six feet in length by three in width,—shone all the treasures of Aucoc and of Odist. It was a magnificent collection, and not one of its innumerable articles of any baser metal than silver and gold. Nevertheless, this collection had evidently been made by degrees, and was not entirely the gift of any one lover. For not feeling any

alarm at the sight of the dressing-room of a lady of a certain character, I amused myself by examining all its details; and I soon discovered, that each of the various and richly chased articles of this toilette table bore different initials and arms.

I looked upon all these things, each of which seemed to represent a separate amour of their unhappy possessor; and I thought to myself that Heaven had been merciful to this poor girl, in not dooming her to survive to incur the ordinary penalty of such a life, but had allowed her to die in the midst of her luxury, and the full glow of her beauty, instead of lingering on, to encounter old age,—that first and bitterest death of the courtesan.

Indeed, what can be more melancholy to behold, than the old age of vice,—above all in a woman? She retains no dignity, and inspires no interest. The eternal repentance, not merely of the bad path followed, but the calculations ill-made, and the money ill-employed, must be an unutterable torture.

I once knew an old woman of the class described, to whom nothing remained of the past but a daughter, as beautiful as herself had been. This poor child—to whom the mother had said, "You are my daughter," only to demand for her own old age the support which she had given to the other's infancy—this poor creature was called Louise, and, obedient to her wretched mother, she yielded herself without will, or passion, or pleasure, to the prostitution to which the former had trained her; as she would have followed any other calling that she might have been taught.

This life of vice—precocious vice,—fed by the sickly condition of this girl, had extinguished in her mind any sense of right and wrong that Heaven might once have bestowed; but which no one had sought to train or develope.

I shall never forget this girl,—who made her appearance upon the Boulevards, every day, at the same hour, accompanied by her mother, who watched her with as much

assiduity as a true and honest mother could have done,—although with far different motives.

I was then very young, and but too ready to accept the easy morality of the age; but I well remember, that I was nevertheless shocked and disgusted, at this unnatural abuse of the holiest tie of natural affection.

Add to this, that never had the countenance of the purest virgin a more exquisite expression of innocence, combined with that of sad, but patient endurance, and the picture is complete.

A time came, however, when this expression vanished, and the countenance of this young girl brightened with joy.

In the midst of her dissipation (of which the mother regulated the programme!), it appeared to the poor sinner, that Heaven allowed her yet a happiness.

One day, in fact, she discovered that she was in the way to become a mother; and what remained of purity in her nature, thrilled with joy.

The soul finds strange refuges and strange consolations!

Louise hastened to announce to her mother the discovery that had rendered herself so happy.

What follows is shameful to tell, and although we are not inventing immoralities, but narrating facts, it were perhaps better to forbear the narration, were it not that we believe it desirable, sometimes, to unveil the miseries and sufferings of these poor beings, whom we are too apt to condemn without hearing, and despise without inquiry. It is shameful and horrible,—but the mother of this poor child replied to her, that they had barely the means of living for two, and certainly not enough for three; that children were useless, and the prolongation of the condition in which she then was, *a loss of time!*

The next day an old woman, whom we will designate only as "a friend of the mother," paid a visit to Louise, —who, after some days of illness, re-appeared, pale and feeble.

Some three months afterwards, a benevolent person, to whom these facts became known, interested himself for

Louise, and undertook to restore her to health, both morally and physically; but she had sustained too severe a shock, from the treatment she had received; and after lingering a short time she died.

The mother still lives. *How*, Heaven only knows!

This story recurred to my memory, while I stood looking at these toilette fittings of gold and silver;—and I must have passed some time in thought, for when I recovered myself, there remained only myself and one of the men in charge, who watched from the door, to see that I took nothing away.

I approached this worthy man—to whom I was evidently an object of grave suspicion—and said,

"Can you tell me, Monsieur, the name of the person who lived here?"

"Mademoiselle Marguerite Gautier."

I had known this girl, by name and by sight.

"What!" exclaimed I, "Marguerite Gautier is dead?"

"Three weeks since."

"And why are these things on view?"

"The creditors think that such a course will increase the proceeds of the sale. People can see, in advance, the effect produced by the hangings and furniture, you understand; and that induces them to buy."

"Creditors? she had debts, then?"

"Oh! a great many."

"But the sale will pay them?"

"And much more."

"To whom then will the surplus revert?"

"To her family."

"Then she *had* a family?"

"So it appears."

I thanked the man for his politeness; and he, reassured as to my intentions, saluted me respectfully, and I departed.

Poor girl! thought I, as I returned home, she must have died sadly enough; for in *her* world one has friends only on condition of being well and beautiful. And, in

spite of myself, I could not but feel pity for the fate of Marguerite Gautier.

There may be many to whom this will appear absurd, or affectedly sentimental; but I have a feeling of compassion and forbearance for these poor creatures, and I do not endeavour to suppress it.

One day in going to the prefecture for my passport, I observed in a neighbouring street a girl of the town dragged forward by two gendarmes.

I do not know what she had done; all I do know is, that she shed bitter tears, while embracing a poor little infant, of some few months old, from whom she was about to be separated by her arrest.

This girl may have been a criminal, but she had the true and holy feelings of a mother.

Since then, I have forborne to condemn even these women at first sight, or as a thing of course.

CHAPTER II.

THE sale was fixed for the 16th. A day's interval was allowed between the time for inspection and the sale itself; that the upholsterers might remove the carpets, take down the hangings, and make the other necessary preparations.

It happened that, just at this period, I had returned from a tour of some duration, and therefore had not heard of the death of Marguerite; and it was natural enough that it had not been mentioned to me among my friends, as one of those items of news of particular interest, which one's friends *do* repeat to him when newly returned to the great centre of news.

Marguerite was beautiful, it is true; but great as is the celebrity acquired by the life of such women, very little is heard of their death. They are suns which set as they

rose, unobserved. It is only their meridian splendour which attracts and dazzles.

When they die young, their death is known simultaneously to all their lovers; for in Paris nearly all the lovers of such a woman sustain a sort of intimacy with each other. Some few remembrances of the deceased are perhaps exchanged, in conversation, among them, and their life continues its course undisturbed by even a passing tear to the memory of the hapless girl with whom they have been thus intimately connected.

At the mature age of five-and-twenty (for that age *is* vastly mature in the precocious atmosphere of a metropolis), tears become a thing so rare, that we cannot bestow them on every passing occasion. It is enough if our parents, who *pay* for being wept for, are mourned by us in consideration of the price which they give in the shape of an inheritance!

As to myself, however, I confess that although *my* initials were not to be found upon any one of the decorations of Marguerite's toilette, that instinctive indulgence, that natural pity, which I have already avowed, and which I could not but feel, caused me to think upon her death, even more, perhaps, than the subject demanded.

I remembered having often met Marguerite in the Champs Elysées, (which she never omitted to visit daily, in her elegant brougham, drawn by two superb bays); and to have remarked in her an air of refinement and distinction exceedingly rare among her class; qualities which greatly enhanced a beauty, in itself almost matchless.

These poor girls, when they go out, are always accompanied by one knows not whom.

As no man consents thus to publish the secret of his nocturnal amours,—and as they, themselves, have a horror of being alone,—they always take with them, either some less fortunate companion of their own class, who possesses no carriage, or one of those elderly belles whose attractions no longer suggest any thought of rivalry, and to whom gentlemen can address themselves unhesitatingly, if desirous to obtain any particulars (no matter of what nature) respecting the younger beauty whom they accompany.

But Marguerite formed an exception to this invariable rule. She always came to the Champs Elysées alone in her carriage,—in which she displayed herself as little as possible : in winter, wrapped in a large cashmere ; in summer, dressed in the simplest manner ; and although she necessarily encountered, in her favourite resort, many gentlemen whom she knew, if per chance she recognised one of them by a smile, the smile was visible only to him for whom it was intended, and was such as the noblest lady might have bestowed.

Nor did she drive between the round point and the entrance of the Champs Elysées, as was and is the practice of her sisterhood :—her pair of horses bore her rapidly to the wood. There she would descend from the carriage, walk about for an hour, enter the vehicle once more, and return to her own house at the full trot of her splendid animals.

All these peculiarities recurred to my memory, and I regretted the death of this girl, (such an exception to her class, and so rare in her attractions,) as one regrets the destruction of some matchless work of art.

In fact it was impossible to meet with greater perfection of beauty than was realised in Marguerite.

Tall, and at the same time slight to an extreme, she possessed, in a superlative degree, the art of making this peculiarity disappear, or appear only as an attraction, merely by the exquisite skill with which she dressed.

Her cashmere, the point of which reached the ground, allowed the escape at either side of the ample folds of her dress of rich silk ; and the rich muff which concealed her hands, and rested upon her chest, was surrounded in turn by drapery so skilfully disposed, that the most fastidious eye found nothing to require in the contour of its lines, or the general effect of the figure.

Her head, a marvel in itself, was singularly graceful. It was very small, and so exquisitely moulded, that De Musset had been heard to say, that her mother must have taken particular pains to form it thus!

In a face of the most faultless oval, place black eyes of

unusual brilliancy, surmounted by brows so perfectly arched that they seemed as if pencilled; veil these eyes with lids so long as to cast a shadow (when drooping) upon the rose-tint of the cheeks; trace a nose perfectly chiselled, straight and slender, with nostrils slightly expanded by the ardent aspirations of a passionate temperament, and a mouth whose lips parted gracefully above teeth white as milk; tinge the complexion with that ripe, velvet down, which covers the peach that the hand of man has never profaned; and you may imagine the *ensemble* of that exquisite head.

Her hair, lying in wavy masses, black as jet, was parted upon the forehead in two large bands, and lost itself at the back of the head, while giving to view the tips of two tiny ears, pendant from which sparkled two diamonds of the value of four or five thousand francs each.

How it was that her passionate life should have left to Marguerite the virgin-like—nay, even child-like—expression which characterised her countenance, is what we can only state, without attempting to explain, or pretending to understand it.

She had a striking portrait of herself, painted by Vidal, the only artist whose pencil could have reproduced that remarkable countenance. Since her death, I have had that portrait, for some days, in my charge, and its likeness is so perfect, that it has recalled and confirmed any details, respecting which I could not entirely rely upon my own memory.

Some of the particulars described in this chapter did not occur to me till afterwards; but I have written them at this period, as essential to the character of Marguerite, and to avoid the necessity of interrupting, hereafter, the regular sequence of my narrative.

Marguerite made it a point to witness all the "first representations" at the theatres, and passed nearly all her evenings at the theatre or in the ball-room. Wherever a new piece was played, she was certain to be seen, with three things that were always inseparable from her presence: her opera-glass, a packet of *bon-bons*, and A BOUQUET OF CAMELIAS.

Marguerite was never known to have any other flowers than camelias; and eventually she came to be known at Madame Barjon's, (the florist's where she purchased the flowers), and subsequently throughout Paris, as *La Dame aux Camelias*,—"The Lady with the Camelias;" and the designation became permanent.

I also knew (in common with all those who moved in a certain circle, in Paris) that Marguerite had been the mistress of certain young gentlemen of the highest fashion; that she avowed it openly, and that they prided themselves upon it:—two things which proved that lovers and mistress were mutually contented.

Nevertheless, for about three years past, and subsequently to a certain visit which she had made to Bagnères, it was said that she had lived exclusively with an aged Duke, a foreigner, of great wealth, who had sought to withdraw her as far as possible from her former life—an endeavour to which, it was added, she had appeared to yield with cheerfulness.

The following is what was currently believed on this subject.

In the spring of 1842, Marguerite was so feeble and so altered in appearance, that the physicians ordered her to visit the waters at Bagnères.

Among the invalids at that place, was the daughter of the Duke of whom we have spoken, and she had not only the same malady as Marguerite, but the same countenance; the personal resemblance between the two being so striking, that one would have taken them for sisters. The young Duchess,* however, was in the last stage of consumption,

* To some readers, it may be necessary to recall the fact, that on the Continent, all the children of noblemen take the same title as that of their parents: the sons and daughters of a Count (for instance) are styled Counts and Countesses, with the prefix generally, however, of their Christian name; as, the "*Count de Langy*" being the father, the son would be called "*Count Charles de Langy;*" and the "*Countess de Langy*" being the mother, the daughter would be called the "*Countess Julie de Langy;*" and the same with the children of Vicomtes, Barons, etc.; *mutatis mutandis*.—TRANSLATOR.

and a few days after the arrival of Marguerite, she sank under the disease.

One morning the Duke, who lingered at Bagnères, as one will linger around the spot which entombs his dearest affections, encountered Marguerite in one of the walks.

It seemed to him that he had met the shade of his departed daughter, and going up to Marguerite, with tears in his eyes, the old man clasped both her hands, and imprinted a kiss upon her forehead; and without knowing who she was, implored permission to visit her, and to love in her person the living image of his lost child.

Marguerite, alone at Bagnères with her maid, and having besides no fears as to compromising herself, accorded unhesitatingly what the poor Duke desired.

There were, however, at Bagnères certain people to whom Marguerite was known, and who made it their business forthwith to inform the Duke of the true position of "Mademoiselle Gautier."

This was a sad shock to the old man, for there the resemblance to his daughter was at an end; but the warning came too late. The young girl's society had become a necessity of his heart; his only inducement to continue to live.

He did not reproach her; indeed, he had no right to do so; but he demanded of her if she felt herself capable of changing her mode of life, offering in exchange for this sacrifice all the compensation that she could desire.

She promised to do as he desired.

It must be observed that at this epoch Marguerite—by nature impulsive and enthusiastic—was an invalid. The manner of her past life appeared to her one of the principal causes of her malady; and a sort of superstition caused her to hope that Providence would leave to her her health and her beauty, in exchange for her repentance and reformation.

And in fact the waters, the exercise, and the life of repose which she led, had almost entirely re-established her health by the end of the summer.

The Duke accompanied her to Paris, where he continued to visit her daily, as at Bagnères.

This connection, of which the true nature and origin were not understood by the public, caused a great sensation here; and the Duke, already famous for his immense fortune, began to acquire an equal notoriety for his supposed prodigality.

The charitable public attributed to libertinism—a vice but too common, among even old men—this intimacy between the aged Duke and the young girl. In fact, people imagined everything to be, except that which *was*.

In real truth, the feelings which the bereaved father entertained towards Marguerite had their origin in a sentiment so pure and holy, that any other intimacy with her than that of mere affection, would have seemed to him unnatural and impious; and he had never addressed to her a single word which his own daughter might not have heard.

It is far from my intention to make of our heroine anything else than she really was. Let us say, therefore, that so long as she was at Bagnères, leading the quiet life of the country, and under the restrictions of medical regimen, her promise was not difficult to keep, and she *had* kept it faithfully. But once again in Paris, it began to seem to this young girl,—accustomed for years to a life of dissipation, with nightly visits to the theatre and the ball-room,—that her solitude, disturbed only by the periodical visits of the Duke, would soon kill her with weariness and *ennui;* and the burning breath of her former life passed from time to time over her cheek and her heart, arousing turbulent and restless emotions.

Add to this, that Marguerite had returned from her excursion more beautiful than she had ever been, that she was scarcely twenty, and that her malady, dormant but not extinct, continued to awaken in her those restless and feverish desires, which are almost always the concomitants of pulmonary affections, and it will be obvious how difficult Marguerite must have found it to persevere in a life of strict quiet and seclusion.

The poor Duke had therefore, one day, a sad trial to undergo, when his kind friends (or the kind friends of his

great wealth), who had been incessantly on the watch for the slightest circumstance that could compromise poor Marguerite, came to inform him, and offer to prove to him, that at certain hours, when she was assured of his absence, she received *other* visitors, and that those visitors sometimes prolonged their stay until the following morning.

Being questioned on this subject, Marguerite had the candour and courage to avow everything to the Duke, and counsel him to cease to trouble himself about her; for that she had found herself unequal to the task of self-denial and life of dulness which she had undertaken, and would not continue to receive benefits from one, her engagements with whom she could not observe.

The Duke went away accordingly, nor did he appear again for a week; but that was the extent of *his* power of self-denial; for on the eighth day he returned, to beg leave to resume his visits; consenting to take Marguerite as she was, provided only that he might continue to see her; and promising under no circumstances to trouble her with reproaches.

Such was the position of affairs three months after the return of Marguerite from Bagnères; that is to say, about the month of November or December, 1842.

CHAPTER III.

On the 16th of March, therefore, I repaired to the Rue d'Antin. It was the day of the sale.

On entering the outer door, the voice of the auctioneer was plainly audible. The sale was in progress.

The apartment was crowded.* Among the crowd were,

* The peculiar use of the word "apartment" by the French, although beginning to obtain some slight currency in English, often leads to singular misapprehensions when the word is translated literally. In French, "apartment" is used to signify either one room, or a *suite* of rooms. An "*appartement*" is that portion of a house which is appropriated to *one tenant*, whether he be alone, or have a

of course, all the "celebrities" of elegant vice,—somewhat scornfully regarded by a considerable number of fashionable ladies, who had again availed themselves of the pretext of a public sale, to have an opportunity of coming into actual proximity with females whom they could not meet otherwise, and whose easy and untrammelled lives, perhaps, some of them in secret envied, while despising.

The stately Duchess of F—— stood side by side with Mademoiselle A——, one of the saddest examples of the modern Aspasia. The Marchioness of T—— hesitated in buying an article, for which she had a competitor in Madame D——, the most noted faithless wife, as well as the most elegant, of our day. The Duke of Y—— (who is believed at Paris to be ruining himself in Madrid, and declared in Madrid to be ruining himself at Paris, while in fact he does not spend even his income in both places) while talking with Madame M——, one of our most charming female novelists, is actually exchanging glances at the same moment with Madame N——, that lovely frequenter of the Champs Elysées, where she appears always dressed in either pink or blue; with her carriage drawn by a pair of matchless black horses, which Tony sold to her for 10,000 francs, and for which she—*has paid him.* And finally, Mademoiselle R——l,—who has made herself, by her talents alone, twice the position which these great ladies acquire by their dowries, and three times that which the others have achieved by their amours—had come, in spite of the cold, to make some purchases; and

companion, or even a family with him; and it may consist of any number of rooms, situated on the same or separate floors; and instead of each *room* being called an "apartment," as with us, it is termed "a piece,"—*une piece;* and one hears of "*un appartement de trois ou quatre pieces;*"—an apartment of three *pieces* or four *pieces;*—and the word recurs so frequently in every translation from the French as to render this explanation desirable; not only for those who do not read French, but for many who *do* so, but are, nevertheless, unacquainted with this peculiar use of a word, which is naturally assumed to be *identical* with its apparent synonyme in English.—TRANSLATOR.

she was certainly, in herself, by no means the slightest object of attention and curiosity.

We could cite many more initials of well-known persons assembled in those saloons—and not a little amazed to find themselves together—but the foregoing show the character of the assemblage, and how numerous and varied a congregation were attracted by the celebrity of the deceased. Every one was gay and lively; and although many were present who had known the departed well, no one appeared to give even a thought to her memory.

The laughter was loud; the auctioneer bawled enough to split one's head; the tradesmen who had secured benches around the table, and who "meant business," endeavoured in vain to obtain silence for transacting it: never was an assembly more varied, more gay, or more noisy.

I took my way quietly amid this tumult, which seemed to me saddening when I reflected that it was taking place at the very threshold of the chamber where the poor creature had so recently expired, whose property they were now selling off to pay her debts.

Having come to examine rather than to buy, I studied the faces of the tradesmen for whose benefit the sale was taking place, and whose features brightened and expanded every time that any article realised a higher price than they had dared to hope.

Worthy and respectable souls, who had literally speculated upon the prostitution of this girl—who had gained more than cent. per cent. by their dealings with her—who had disturbed with their "stamped papers" the latest moments of her wretched life, and who now came, after her death, to reap the fruits of their honourable speculations, and the interest accruing upon the no less honourable "credit" which they had given!

How much justice was there not in the faith of the ancients, who accorded but one and the same deity to shopkeepers and thieves!*

* "Shop-keepers,"—*marchands* in the original; often most inaccurately rendered by our word *merchant*, the equivalent of which is

Dresses, shawls, jewellery, were being sold with incredible rapidity. Nothing of that kind, however, suited *me*, and I waited patiently. Presently the auctioneer cried—

"A volume beautifully bound, with gilt edges, entitled 'Manon Lescaut.' *There is something written upon the first page.* Ten francs are demanded."

"Twelve!" said a voice, after a long pause.

"Fifteen!" said I.

But why? I knew nothing of the book. Doubtless, on account of the "*something written on the first page.*"

"Fifteen!" cried the auctioneer.

"Thirty!" said the original bidder, in a tone which seemed to defy competition.

This looked like a contest.

"Thirty-five!" said I, therefore, in a tone as defiant as that of my antagonist.

"Forty!"

"Fifty!"

"Sixty!"

"A hundred!" said I, resolutely.

Had I sought to produce an effect, I might have been proud of that which was the result of this bidding; for a perfect silence followed it, and the spectators regarded with curiosity a person that seemed so resolute in his purpose of possessing this volume.

It would appear that the expression given to my last bidding had "convinced" my antagonist, and that he chose to abandon the contest; for, bowing to me, he was pleased to say, although rather late in the day,

"I surrender, Monsieur."

No one else having interfered, the book was necessarily adjudged to me.

This being settled, and fearing that some fresh feeling of rivalry might tempt me to some similar piece of extra-

négociant. Bonaparte was rendered most indignant on the presentation to him of an envoy from America, who being one of the merchant-princes of that region, was unluckily represented to the Emperor as a "*marchand*,"—a "shop-keeper!" and the supposed insult had nearly caused an international quarrel.—TRANSLATOR.

vagance (which, however gratifying to my vanity, was anything but suitable to the state of my purse), I gave my address to the auctioneer's clerk, and departed. I *ought* perhaps to have bestowed some consideration upon those persons who, having witnessed this scene, were no doubt asking themselves what purpose could have led me to pay 100 francs for a book which I could have obtained anywhere for a tenth of the sum. But I gave little thought to them, or their conjectures.

An hour or two afterwards I sent to take possession of my purchase.

Upon the blank leaf, at the commencement of the volume, was written in an elegant hand, the dedication of the giver of the book, consisting of these words:

"*Manon à Marguerite.—Humility.*—Signed, *Armand Duval.*"

What signified this word "humility?"

Did Manon Lescaut recognise in Marguerite—according to the estimate of M. Armand Duval—a superiority of dissipation, or a superiority of feeling, that should impose humility upon the latter?

The second interpretation was the most probable, because the first would have been a sheer impertinence, which Marguerite would never have tolerated.

I left town again, however, and thought no more of the matter for the time being.

Manon Lescaut is a touching narrative, no detail of which is unknown to me; but, nevertheless, whenever I find the volume under my hand, I am always attracted towards it by sympathies; and for the hundreth time I share again in the life of this heroine of the Abbé Prévost.

Now this heroine is so life-like that I seem actually to have known her; and the sort of comparison instituted between her and Marguerite gave a fresh attraction to my re-perusal of the work; and my lenient consideration was augmented by pity, and almost by affection, for the poor girl from whose effects this volume had come to my hands.

Manon had died in a desert, it is true, but in the arms of the man who loved her with his whole soul; and who,

when she was dead, dug a grave for her with his own hands, watered it with his tears, and then enshrouded, as it were, his own heart; while Marguerite, a sinner like Manon, and perhaps like her reformed, died in the midst of luxury (if I could believe what I had seen), and in the very chamber devoted to her former life; but not the less in the midst of a desert of the heart, far more arid, far more vast, and far more pitiless, than that in which Manon had been entombed.

Indeed, Marguerite, as I had learned from those who knew, had found no one consolation to cheer her dying bed during the two long months through which her lingering agony had been protracted.

From Manon and from Marguerite my thoughts could not but turn towards those whom I knew, and whom I could *see* hurrying recklessly, blindly, and actually with songs upon their lips, towards an inevitable death of wretchedness and neglect.

Poor creatures! if it be wrong to love them, it is certainly not less so to pity them. We pity the blind, who have never seen the light of day; the deaf, who have never listened to the harmonies of nature; the dumb, who have never been permitted to give utterance to the feelings of their soul;—and yet, under a false pretence of delicacy, we are forbidden to pity that blindness of the heart, that deafness of the soul, that dumbness of the conscience, which maddens and benumbs these unhappy beings, and renders them incapable of seeing and recognising their true good, of hearing the voice of God, or of speaking the pure language of faith and love.

Victor Hugo has created *Marion Delorme*; De Musset has called *Bornerette* into being; Dumas has described *Fernande*. The thinkers and the poets of all past time have given to this unhappy class the offering of their sympathy and their indulgent consideration; and occasionally some great man has restored one of them to existence by the bestowal of his affection, and even his name.

If I insist thus upon this point, it is because among those who may chance to read my narrative many are pre-

pared beforehand to throw aside and condemn a book, in which they expect to find an apology for vice, and even for prostitution ;—the author's years contributing, no doubt, to this apprehension.

Those who think thus are mistaken ; and if only this apprehension deters them, they may proceed with the perusal of the book without fear.

I am honestly convinced of this : that to the woman to whom education has not taught the sense of right, the kindness of Providence opens, almost always, two paths which lead thither : and those paths are Suffering and Love.

These paths are difficult. Those who tread them must do so with bleeding feet, and wounded hands ; but they leave, nevertheless, upon the thorns of the pathway the gauds and decorations of vice, and reach the goal in that state of nakedness, for which they need not blush before their Saviour.

Those who encounter these courageous travellers are bound to assist them, and to declare that they *have* encountered them ; for in publishing this fact they point out the road to others.

One is not called upon merely to place as it were at the outset of the road of life two guide posts, inscribed respectively, " *The good road*," and " *The bad road*," and to say to those who present themselves " *Choose !* " but we should, like the Saviour, show the paths which lead from the second road to the first, to those who are being tempted by the way ; and, above all, should avoid giving to these paths an aspect too sombre or too inaccessible.

Christianity is before us, with its marvellous parable of the Prodigal Son, to teach us clemency and forbearance. Christ himself was full of love for souls wounded by human passions, whose wounds He rejoiced to heal by pouring into them the balm extracted from the wounds themselves.

Thus said He to Magdalen, " Because thou hast loved much, unto thee shall much be forgiven ;"—a sublimity of forgiveness which must have enkindled a faith no less sublime.

Should we be more strict than the Saviour? Why should we, in holding to the opinions of this world, which makes itself harsh that it may seem strong, repulse those bleeding souls, from whose wounds full often is poured out the evil of their past life, and which need only the touch of a friendly hand to be restored and healed?

It is to my own generation that I address myself. To those for whom the theories of Voltaire no longer exist—to those who, like myself, realise the fact, that within the last fifteen years humanity has made one of its most daring forward strides.

The knowledge of good and evil is acquired, once and for ever. Belief reconstructs itself. The respect for holy things is restored to us; and if the world has not altogether reformed itself, it has, at least, made itself much better.

The efforts of all men of intellect tend to the same end; and all great minds hold to the same principle and purpose: "Let us be virtuous! let us be childlike! let us be truthful! Evil is vain and false; let us have the pride of virtue; and, above all, let us never despair of our race. Let us not despise even the woman who is nor Mother, nor Sister, nor Daughter, nor Wife. Let us not restrict our esteem to our family, nor reduce our lenience to mere egotism. Since 'there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety-and-nine just persons who need no repentance,' let us endeavour to create such rejoicing on high. It will be rendered to us again with usury. Let us leave upon our road the alms of our indulgence for those whom earthly desires have tempted astray, but who may yet be saved by the enkindling of a celestial hope."

Certainly it must appear bold, and even presumptuous, for me to speak of evolving such grand results from the unimportant subject of this little work; but I am of those who believe that the little contains the germ of the great, as the acorn encloses the oak. The infant is small, yet the man is there contained; the brain is confined in narrow limits, yet it developes thought; the eye is but a point, yet it grasps the vastness of space.

CHAPTER IV.

The sale lasted for two days, and produced no less than 150,000 francs (£6,000).

The creditors had divided two-thirds of this among themselves, and the relatives of Marguerite (a sister and a little nephew) had inherited the remainder.

This sister opened her eyes when the notary wrote to inform her that she had succeeded to a fortune of 50,000 francs.

For seven years this person had seen nothing of Marguerite, who had suddenly disappeared one day; nor had the sister, or any one else of her former acquaintances, heard or known anything of Marguerite's life or history from the moment of her disappearance.

This sister had been summoned to Paris to receive her inheritance, and great was the astonishment of Marguerite's acquaintances to see in her only relative a big, rosy country girl, the quintessence of rusticity, who until that hour had never quitted her native village.

Her fortune, however, was made at one stroke, without her even knowing whence came this unexpected good-luck.

She returned speedily (as I was afterwards told) to the country, in grief for her sister's death; but somewhat consoled by the investment in the four-and-half per cents. which she made before her departure.

All these circumstances, after due repetition throughout Paris—that great mother-city of scandal,—had begun to be forgotten, and I also had begun to forget the interest which I had taken in the matter, when a new incident brought to my knowledge the entire history of Marguerite, and made me acquainted with details so touching as to inspire me with the desire of writing this narrative, and I *have* written it accordingly.

One morning there was a ring at the door of my apartment.

My servant, or rather the porter of the house, who officiated also as my servant, went to the door, and returned bringing me a card, and informing me that the person from whom he had received it desired to speak with me.

I glanced at the card, and read upon it these two words—

Armand Duval.

I endeavoured to remember where I had seen this name before, and soon recollected the fly-leaf of the volume of *Manon Lescaut.*

What could the person who had given this book to Marguerite possibly want with *me?* I desired, however, that he might be shown in immediately.

There entered a tall, pale young man, dressed in a travelling costume, which he seemed not to have changed for some days, nor even to have taken the thought to brush since his arrival in Paris, for it was covered with dust.

M. Duval made no effort to conceal the deep emotion under which he laboured, and it was with tears in his eyes that he said to me,—

"Monsieur, I hope you will excuse my visit and my dress; for besides the fact that young men are not generally exacting among themselves on these points, I was so anxious to see you immediately, that I have not even spared time to visit the hotel where I have secured apartments, but have come directly to you, fearing, despite the early hour, that you might be gone out before my arrival."

I begged M. Duval to take a seat near the fire, which he did, while taking from his pocket a handkerchief, which he pressed to his eyes.

"You must be at a loss to understand," continued he, smiling sadly, "for what an unknown visitor seeks you at such an hour, in such a garb, and weeping in so childish a manner. But, in brief, I come, Monsieur, to ask a great service at your hands."

"Pray speak, Monsieur, I shall be glad if I can serve you."

"You attended the sale of the effects of Marguerite Gautier, I believe?"

At mention of this name the emotion of the young man became too powerful for suppression, and he covered his face with his hands in an uncontrollable burst of grief.

"I fear," continued he, "that it must appear almost ridiculous in your eyes; but I can only pray you to excuse me, and assure you that I shall never forget the patience with which you have given me your attention."

"Monsieur," I replied, "if the service which it appears that I may be able to render you can in any degree assuage the suffering which you experience, tell me at once, I pray you, in what way I can be useful to you, and I shall be truly happy to meet your wishes."

The grief of the young man was contagious, and involuntarily I felt a desire to befriend him.

He said to me, therefore,

"You purchased something at Marguerite Gautier's sale?"

"Yes, a book."

"*Manon Lescaut?*"

"Precisely."

"Have you the book still?"

"It is in my bed-room."

Mr. Armand Duval appeared much relieved at this announcement, and thanked me, as if I had already begun to serve him by preserving this book.

I went into the inner room, obtained the book, and handed it to him.

"This is indeed it," exclaimed he, as he examined the inscription, and turned over the leaves.

Two large tears fell from his eyes upon the pages.

"And pray, Sir," said he, raising his head again, and not endeavouring to conceal that he had been weeping, and was ready to weep again,—"Pray, Sir, do you attach much value to this book?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Because I wish to beg you to let me have it."

"Pardon my curiosity," returned I, "but it was you, then, who gave the book to Marguerite Gautier?"

"It was I."

"The book is yours, Monsieur; take it; I am happy to be able to restore it to you."

"But," said he, with some embarrassment, "I must, at least, be allowed to give you the price which you have paid for it."

"By no means. Allow me to beg your acceptance of the book. The price of a single volume, in such a sale, is very trivial, and I cannot now say how much I paid for it."

"You paid no less than 100 francs for it, Monsieur?"

"It is true," said I, embarrassed in my turn; "but how could you be aware of it?"

"Very simply. I hoped to reach Paris in time for the sale, but have arrived, in fact, only this morning. I was bent upon possessing some object which had belonged to her, and I ran to the auctioneer and demanded permission to see the list of articles sold, and the names of the purchasers; and I then saw that this book had been bought by you, and resolved to beg you to transfer it to me; although the price which you had paid made me fear that you yourself associated some souvenir with the volume, which might render you unwilling to part with it."

In thus speaking, Armand was evidently impressed with a fear that I had known Marguerite as he himself had done.

I hastened to disabuse him.

"I knew Mademoiselle Gautier only by sight," said I. "Her death made that impression upon me that the death of a young female naturally makes upon a young man who had regarded her beauty with admiration, and I was desirous to purchase some small article which had been hers. I fixed upon this book—I hardly know why; but was rendered obstinate in my pursuit of it for the satisfaction of annoying a gentleman who was bidding for it, in a manner of direct defiance; and I repeat, therefore, that it is entirely at your disposal; and I again beg you to accept it, in proof that you do not regard me in the affair

as you would an auctioneer, and as the gage of a longer and more intimate acquaintance between us hereafter."

"Be it so, Monsieur," said Armand, offering his hand and pressing my own; "I accept your offer, and shall remember your kindness as long as I live."

I would gladly have questioned this young man respecting Marguerite; for the dedication of the book, the journey which he had made, and his anxiety to repossess the volume, had excited my curiosity: but I feared to press my inquiries, lest I should seem to have refused money for the book, in order to establish a right of inquiring into his affairs by my claims upon his gratitude.

One would have thought that he divined my feelings, for he said, "You have read this book?"

"Throughout."

"What did you think of the two lines written by me at the beginning?"

"I saw at once that you had seen in this poor girl something that removed her from the ordinary category of her class; for I would not imagine in those words a mock compliment."

"And you judged rightly, Monsieur. This girl was an angel. Look," he added: "read this letter." And he handed me a letter, which had evidently been folded and unfolded times innumerable.

I opened it. It contained the following:—

"My dear Armand,—I have received your letter. You have remained kind, and I thank Heaven for it.

"Yes, my friend, I am ill indeed, and of a malady which is inexorable;—but the interest in me which you continue to retain greatly lightens my sufferings. It is scarcely possible that I should live long enough to have the happiness of again pressing the kind hand that has written the letter which I have just received; and the language of which would itself suffice to cure me, could anything do so.

"I cannot hope to see you again, for I am very near death, and hundreds of leagues separate us. My poor friend, your Marguerite of other days is sadly changed

and it is perhaps better that you should *not* see her again, than see her such as she now is.

"You ask me if I forgive you. Oh, most willingly! for the harm which you would have done me was but a proof of the love which you felt.

"I have been confined to my bed for a month; and I cling so to your good opinion, that I devote some time each day to writing the journal of my life from the time when we parted, until the moment when I shall no longer have the strength to write more.

"If the interest which you feel for me is real, Armand, go, when you return to Paris, to Julie Duprat. She will give you this journal. You will there learn the reason, and the excuse, for my conduct towards you.

"Julie has been very good to me. We speak of you often. She was with me when your letter arrived. We wept over it together.

"In case I have not again heard from you, she will be charged with sending you these papers, on your arrival in France. But do not feel yourself obliged to me for them, for this daily recalling of the only happy hours of my life does me good; and if you find in those pages an excuse for my conduct, I shall, in turn, have found an inexhaustible solace in writing them.

"I could wish to leave you something which should recall me ever to your mind; but everything is seized in my apartment, and nothing belongs to me more.

"Do you understand, my friend? I am about to die, and from my very bed-room I hear in my drawing-room the footsteps of the man whom my creditors have placed there, to see that nothing is removed, and to take care that nothing remains to me if I should happen to survive! It is to be hoped that they will wait till all is over before they actually commence their sale!

"These men are pitiless!—or rather, I deceive myself; it is Heaven which is just and inflexible!

"Well, my friend, you will come to the sale, and you will purchase something there; for if I put the smallest thing aside for you, and it is discovered, these people are

quite capable of prosecuting you for fraudulent receiving goods under seizure.

"It is a sad life which I am about to quit!

"Oh! that Heaven may kindly permit me to behold you once more before I die! But, according to all probability, I have now to bid you adieu, my friend. Pardon me that I do not write more; but the physicians, who promise to cure me, have exhausted me by bleeding, and my hand refuses longer to guide the pen.

"MARGUERITE GAUTIER."

In fact, the last words were scarcely legible.

I returned the letter to Armand, who had evidently been reperusing it mentally while I read it upon the paper, for he said as he took it, "Who could ever have believed that the writer of that letter was a girl of such a class?" and overcome again by his recollections, he gazed for a long time upon the letter, and at length pressed it to his lips.

"And when I think," resumed he, "that she is dead, without my seeing her, and that I shall never see her more—when I think that she has done for me more than a sister would have done—I cannot forgive myself for having left her to die thus. Dead! dead!—thinking of me, writing to me, uttering my name!—poor, poor Marguerite!"

And Armand, giving free course to his grief, gave me his hand, and continued,—

"People would consider me very childish to lament thus for the death of such a girl, but they do not know what I have caused her to suffer; how unjust and cruel I was to her, and how forgiving and submissive she to me. I fancied that it was for me to forgive *her*, and now I find myself undeserving of the pardon which she accords to *me*. I would give ten years of my life to weep for one hour at her feet!"

It is always difficult to soothe a grief which you do not know; nevertheless I was touched with lively sympathy for this young man, who so frankly made me the confident of his sorrows and regrets; and I said to him, "Have you no relations, no friends? Visit them, and their affection will console you. As to myself, I can only pity you."

"That is true," said he, rising and walking rapidly up and down the room. "I weary you. Forgive me for forgetting that my grief matters little to you, and that I was obtruding upon you a matter which could have no interest for you."

"Nay! You entirely misconceive the purport of my words. I would gladly serve you; and I regret only my inability to soothe your affliction. If my society and that of my friends will afford you any satisfaction—in fine, if you have need of me in any way whatever, I entreat you to believe that it will gratify me to be useful to you."

"Forgive my sensitiveness," returned he! "grief exaggerates one's sensations. Allow me to remain here for a few minutes longer, to take time at least to dry my tears; that the idlers in the street may not regard as a curiosity the great boy who is weeping. You have rendered me a great service," he continued, "in giving me this book. I know not how to show my sense of what I owe you."

"By according me your friendship," replied I, "and by telling me the cause of your grief. One is consoled by telling what one suffers."

"That is true; but to-day I am too much overcome, and I should utter but incoherent words to you. Another day you shall know this history, and judge whether I have not reason to mourn for this poor girl. And now," he added, wiping his brow once more, "tell me that you have not found me intolerably foolish, and give me permission to see you again."

The look of this young man was good and gentle, and was greatly attracted towards him.

As to him, his eyes began to be clouded again with tears and seeing that I observed it, he turned away his head.

"Courage, my friend!" said I; "take comfort."

He bade me adieu, and making a scarcely effectual effort to restrain his emotion, he rather escaped from the room than went out of it.

I lifted the curtain of my window and saw him reenter the cabriolet which was in waiting at the door; but hardly was he within when he burst once more into tears, and buried his face in his handkerchief.

CHAPTER V.

A considerable time elapsed, during which I heard no more of Armand; but, on the other hand, Marguerite had been the frequent subject of conversation.

It seems sometimes to happen, that the name of a person who is unknown to you, or at any rate indifferent, has only to be pronounced in your presence, for certain details to begin to group themselves around it, and for you to suddenly find all your friends talking about it, although they had never dreamed of doing so before. You learn that you have been repeatedly brought in contact with this person, and that she has passed you many times in your life without your remarking it; and you find in the events which are narrated to you a coincidence, an actual affinity, with certain events of your own life.

I did not find myself in exactly this position in the case of Marguerite, since I had seen and met her, and knew her by sight. Nevertheless, since the sale, her name had come so frequently to my ears,—and, in the case named in the previous chapter, the name had been blended with a grief so profound, that my surprise had been greatly excited, and my curiosity aroused, to know more of a character seemingly so exceptional.

The result was that even in meeting acquaintances to whom I had never before spoken of Marguerite, I addressed them with,—

"Did you know Marguerite Gautier?"

"The *Dame aux Camelias?*"

"The same."

"Quite well."

This "*quite well*" was, in many cases, accompanied by a smile, as to the meaning of which there could be no doubt.

"Well, what sort of a person was she?" continued I.

"A good girl."

"And that is all?"

"Good heavens! yes; except that she had more spirit, and perhaps more heart, than her companions."

"But you know nothing particular in regard to her?"

"Oh! yes. She ruined the Baron de G——."

"Oh! only that?"

"She was the mistress of the old Duke of B——."

"Really his mistress?"

"It was said so. At any rate, he gave her immense sums of money."

Always the same general facts. I was curious, however, to learn something precise as to the connection between Marguerite and Armand Duval.

I met a gentleman one day who had a singularly extensive acquaintance among ladies who were well known. I questioned him; had *he* known Marguerite Gautier?

The same "*quite well*," was the response.

"What sort of girl was she?"

"Beautiful and good. Her death grieved me very much."

"Had she not a lover named Armand Duval?"

"A tall, fair youth?"

"The same."

"Yes."

"Who was this Armand, then?"

"Oh! I fancy he was a youth who spent with her what little he possessed, and then was forced to quit her. They say he was quite mad for her."

"And she?"

"That she was really much attached to him,—but as such girls are attached. One must not expect from them more than they can bestow."

"What has become of Armand?"

"I do not know. I was very slightly acquainted with him. He lived for five or six months with Marguerite; but it was in the country. When she returned to Paris they separated."

"And you have not seen him since?"

"Never."

Nor had I seen Armand again. I had begun to ask myself, whether, at the time of his visit to me, the news of the death of Marguerite, having just reached him, had not somewhat exaggerated his love of the old time, and consequently his grief; and that both having faded somewhat, after the first outburst, he had half forgotten her, and quite forgotten his promise to visit me again.

This supposition seemed probable enough on general grounds; but there had been in the grief of Armand an accent of sincerity; and passing to the other extreme, I fancied that his sorrow might have changed into illness; and my hearing nothing of him, indicated that he was ill, or even perhaps dead.

I was interested, involuntarily, in this young man. Perhaps this interest was dashed with selfishness; perhaps I had imagined beneath his grief a touching history of the affections; and perhaps, in fact, my desire to know it had much to do with my anxiety as to the silence of Armand.

At length, as M. Duval did not visit me, I resolved to visit him. It was not difficult to find a pretext for so doing; but, unhappily, I did not know his address, and among all whom I had questioned no one could inform me of it.

I went to the Rue d'Antin. The porter who had been with Marguerite might know Armand's address. No! it was a new porter, and he knew nothing about it.

I then ascertained the cemetery in which Marguerite had been interred. It was Montmartre.

April had arrived. The weather was fine. The graves would no longer wear the desolate aspect of winter. In fact, it was warm enough for the living to think of the dead, and pay them a visit.

I repaired to the cemetery, satisfied that a single glance at the grave of Marguerite would show whether the grief of Armand still continued, and that I might thus learn what had become of him.

I entered the keeper's lodge, and asked if on the 22nd of February a female named Marguerite Gautier had not

been buried in that cemetery. He turned the leaves of a large volume in which are inscribed the names and localities of all those who take up their last abode at Montmartre; and presently informed me that, in truth, on the 22nd of February, at noon, a young woman of that name *had* been interred there.

I begged to be shown to the grave, because there is no means of finding one's way without a guide to this city of the dead, although it has its streets like the cities of the living.

The keeper summoned a gardener, to whom he commenced giving the necessary indications of the locality of the grave, but who interrupted him by saying "I know, I know."

"The grave is easily recognized," continued he, turning to me.

"Why so?" demanded I.

"Because it has flowers so different from all the others.'

"It is you, then, who take charge of it?"

"Yes, Monsieur; and I wish all relatives took as much care for the dead as the young gentleman who has placed this grave in my charge."

After a few turns, the gardener paused, saying,—

"Here it is."

I found beneath my eyes a little enclosure of flowers which one would never have supposed to be a grave, if a headstone of white marblehad not established the fact.

An iron railing enclosed the ground belonging to the grave, and this space was literally covered with white camelias.

"What say you to that?" exclaimed the gardener.

"That it is very beautiful."

"And every time a camelia fades, I have orders to replace it."

"And who gave you this order?"

"A young man who wept much the first time he came. An old lover of the deceased, no doubt; for it appears that she was a gay one, this girl. They say she was very pretty. Perhaps Monsieur was acquainted with her?"

"Yes."

"Equally as well as the other gentleman?" asked the gardener, with a significant smile.

"No. I never spake with her."

"And yet you come to see her here? Well! that is very good of you; for those who come to visit the poor thing do not overcrowd the cemetery."

"No one comes, then?"

"Not a soul, except this young man, who came once."

"Only once?"

"Once only."

"And never returned!"

"No; but he will, when he comes back."

"He is on a journey, then? Do you know where?"

"I believe he is gone to visit the sister of Mademoiselle Gautier."

"And what to do, pray?"

"To demand her authority for the exhumation and removal of the body."

"Why should he wish that?"

"Ah! you know, sir, that people have strange ideas about the dead. We see this every day,—we, here. This grave is purchased for only five years, and the young gentleman wishes a deed in perpetuity, and a larger plot of ground, in the new quarter."

"Which do you call 'the new quarter?'"

"The new graves, that they are now selling, over to the left. If the cemetery had been always managed as at present, there would not be its equal in the world; but there is much to do, now, to make it what it should be. And then people are so odd!"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean to say, that there are people who bring their pride even here. Now it appears that this Mademoiselle Gautier had lived rather fast. (Pardon the expression.) At present, she is dead, poor thing, and there remains as much of her as of those against whom there is nothing to say, and whose graves we sprinkle every day. Now then! When the friends of those who are interred beside her, are informed who she was, can you believe that they object to

her being placed here? And that they say, such people ought to be buried in a place by themselves, like the paupers! Did you ever hear anything like that? I gave them a good stirring up,—I did. The fat citizens, who don't come four times in a year to see their dead; who bring their own flowers with them,—and such flowers! Who grudge to keep up the graves of those whom they pretend to weep; and have, in fact, written on their tombs, tears that they have never shed; and yet *they* come to make a difficulty about who lies in the vicinity! You can believe me, or not, Monsieur; I did not know this young girl,—I don't know what she did—but I love the poor little thing for all that; and I take good care of her, and furnish camelias for her at the lowest price. She is my favourite! (*C'est ma morte de predilection!*) We fellows, we are forced to love the dead, because we are so occupied with them, that we have hardly time to love anything else!"

I looked at this honest fellow, and my readers need not be told the emotion which I experienced in listening to him.

He probably perceived it; for he continued:—

"They say, that they were young men who ruined themselves, for that girl there; and that she had lovers who adored her. Ah! well; and when I think that not one of them all comes to see her, or to bring her a single flower, it is that which seems so odd, and so pitiful. But yet she needs no pity. She has her tomb,—and if there is only one who remembers her, he does enough for all the others. But we have here poor girls of the same sort, and the same age, whom they toss into the common trench; and it strikes me to the heart, when I hear their poor bodies thrown into the ground. And not a single soul thinks of them, once they are dead! It is not always pleasant, the work we have to do; especially if we have a little heart left. But what would you have? It is too much for *me*. I have a fine, big girl of twenty; and when they bring here a dead girl of her age, I think of her, and whether it be a fine lady or a poor thing like this that comes, I can't help being grieved."

"But I weary you with my talk," continued he; "and

it is not to listen to me that you came here. I was told to show you the grave of Mademoiselle Gautier. There it is. Can I be of any other service to you?"

"Do you know the address of M. Armand Duval?" I asked.

"Yes, Monsieur. He lives in —— street. At least, it is there that I go to be paid for the flowers which you see."

"Thank you, my friend."

I cast a last look upon this flowery tomb, of which I could not but wish to pierce the depths, to see what the cold grave had made of the beautiful creature who had been cast into its bosom; and I walked away, sad and thoughtful.

"Does Monsieur wish to see M. Duval?" asked the gardener, who was walking beside me.

"Yes."

"I am certain that he has not returned, without my seeing him here."

"You are convinced, then, that he has not forgotten Marguerite?"

"I am not only convinced of that, but I am certain that his desire to have the grave changed, is solely the desire to see her once more."

"How is that?"

"The first word that he said to me when he entered the cemetery, was '*How to see her again?*' That could be done only by changing the grave; and I gave him all the necessary particulars for obtaining that change. You see, when they transfer the dead from one grave to another, it is essential that they should be identified; and the family alone can authorise the proceeding,—at which, in fact, a commissary of police is required to preside. It is to obtain this authorisation, that M. Duval has gone to visit the sister of Mademoiselle Gautier,—and his first visit on his return, will certainly be to this place."

We had reached the gate of the cemetery. I again thanked the worthy gardener, as I handed him some pieces of money; and I repaired to the address which he had given me.

Armand had not returned.

I left word at his house, begging him to come and see

me, on his arrival; or at least to let me know where I could find him.

Only two days afterwards, in the morning, I received a letter from M. Duval, informing me of his return, and begging me to call on him; adding that, overcome by fatigue, he was quite unable to leave the house.

CHAPTER VI.

I found Armand in bed. On seeing me, he extended his hand, which I found burning hot.

"You are feverish," said I.

"It is nothing," said he; "only the fatigue of a rapid journey."

"You have been to see Marguerite's sister?"

"Yes. But who told you?"

"I know it.—And you have obtained that which you sought?"

Yes,—again; but who informed you of my journey and its object?"

"The gardener of the cemetery."

"You have seen the grave?"

I hardly dared to answer; for the tone of this last inquiry, showed that Armand was still a prey to the grief of which I had been a witness; and that every time his own thoughts, or the words of another, led to this painful subject, his emotions would overpower his will.

I contented myself, therefore, with a simple sign of assent.

"He has taken good care of it?" asked Armand.

"Perfect."

Two big tears rolled down the cheeks of the invalid, who turned away his head to hide them. I assumed the air of not having seen them, and endeavoured to change the conversation.

"It is three weeks since you left," said I.

"Yes—just three weeks."

"You have had a long journey?"

"Ah, I have not been travelling all the time. I was ill for a fortnight. I should have returned long since; but I had hardly reached my destination, when I was seized with a fever, and forced to keep my chamber."

"And you set out again, without having recovered?"

"If I had remained another week in that region, I should have died."

"But now that you are returned, you really must take care of yourself. Your friends will come to see you,—myself the foremost, if you permit me."

"In two hours I shall get up."

"How imprudent."

"It is necessary."

"What is there so pressing?"

"I must go to the commissary of police."

"Why do you not send some one else with the mission, the performance of which may render you very ill again."

"It is the only thing that can cure me. I *must* see her. Since I have learned of her death—and especially since I have seen her grave—I cannot sleep. I cannot realise to myself, that this girl, whom I left so lovely and so young, is *dead*. I must assure myself of it. I must *see* what has become of the being whom I so loved: and perhaps the horror of the spectacle will supersede the despair of memory. You will accompany me, will you not? That is, if it will not weary you too much."

"What said the sister to you?"

"Nothing. She seemed greatly astonished that a stranger should wish to purchase a piece of ground and construct a tomb for Marguerite; and she signed, at once, the authorisation which I asked."

"Listen to me! Defer this removal until you are better."

"Oh, I shall be well able to go through with it, believe me. Indeed, I shall go mad, unless I finish at once that which I have undertaken; and the accomplishment of which has become a necessity of my grief. I declare to you, that I cannot compose myself until I have *seen* Marguerite. It is, perhaps, a caprice of the fever that consumes me, a dream of my restlessness; a result of my delirium; but if

I must become a Trappist (like Mde. Rancé), after having fulfilled my purpose, I yet will fulfil it!"

"I can understand this," said I, "and I will be at your service. Have you seen Julie Duprat?"

"Yes. I saw her the very day of my first return."

"Has she given you the papers which Marguerite confided to her, for you?"

"They are here."

Armand drew a roll of paper from beneath his pillow, and instantly replaced it. "I know by heart what these papers contain," said he. "For three weeks past I have read them ten times a day. You shall read them also; but that shall be hereafter, when I am more calm, and when I can explain to you all that this confession reveals of love and affection. But now I have a service to ask of you."

"What?"

"You have a carriage at the door?"

"Yes."

"Well, then: will you take my passport* and go to the Post Office, to ask if there are any letters for me? My father and sister were to have written to me at Paris: and I left here with so much precipitation before, as not to inquire after their letters before leaving. When you come back, we can go together, to notify the commissary of police of the ceremony of to-morrow."

Armand handed me his passport, and I drove to the post-office in the Rue Jean Jacques Rousseau.

There were two letters in the name of Duval. I took them, and returned.

When I re-appeared, Armand was already dressed and prepared to go out.

"Thank you," said he, taking his letters; and added, after a glance at the address, "Yes: they are from my father and sister. They must have wondered at my silence."

* The rule of the Post Restante at all continental towns, is to require the persons applying for letters, either to present or send their passports as a proof of identity. The passport, thus sent, by a servant or any third person, is regarded as an "order" for the delivery of one's letters to the bearer.—TRANSLATOR.

He opened the letters, and rather divined their contents than ascertained them, for they were of some four pages deep; and at the end of a moment he had refolded them. "Let us go," resumed he, "I will answer these to-morrow."

We went to the commissary of police, and Armand handed him the authorisation which he had obtained from Marguerite's sister.

The commissary gave him in exchange, a letter of advice for the keeper of the cemetery. It was arranged that the removal of the body should take place the next day, at ten o'clock; that I should call for him an hour beforehand; and that we should go together to the cemetery.

I was myself curious to be present on this occasion; and I confess that I slept little that night. To judge from the thoughts which the expectation of the morrow awakened in *me*, the night must have been a long one for Armand.

When I entered his apartment at nine o'clock the next morning, I found him terribly pale,—but he seemed calm.

He smiled and gave me his hand.

His candles were burned down to the sockets, and before we went out Armand despatched to the post-office a bulky letter, addressed to his father, and containing, no doubt, his thoughts of the previous night.

Half-an-hour later we were at Montmartre.

The commissary was waiting for us.

We walked slowly in the direction of the grave of Marguerite. The commissary went first; Armand and I followed.

From time to time, I felt that the arm of my companion (which I held within my own) trembled convulsively, and shivered as if seized with a sudden chill. But when I looked anxiously at him, he understood my look, and smiled to re-assure me; but since we had left his house, we had not exchanged a word.

Shortly before we reached the grave, Armand paused for a moment, and applied his handkerchief to his face,—which I then perceived to be dripping with perspiration.

I profited by this pause, to draw breath myself; for I too felt as if my heart was compressed in a vice.

Whence comes the strange pleasure which one takes in spectacles of this sort?

When we arrived at the grave, the gardener had already removed all the pots of flowers,—the iron-railing had been taken away,—and two men were removing the earth.

Armand leaned against a tree, and looked on.

All his soul seemed to be in his eyes.

Presently one of the diggers struck upon a stone.

At this sound, Armand recoiled as if he had received an electric shock, and unconsciously pressed my hand so violently as to give me pain.

One of the workmen now took a large shovel, and gradually emptied the grave, until he came to the large stones which lay directly upon the coffin, and which he threw out one by one.

I watched Armand, for I feared that at any moment the emotion which he so visibly suppressed might overpower him; but he continued to observe the process, with his eyes fixed and staring, as in madness; a slight quivering of the cheeks and lips being alone perceptible, and proving that he was suffering a violent excess of nervous excitement.

As to myself, I can say but one thing: I wished I had not come.

When the coffin was quite uncovered, the commissary said to the workmen,—"Open!"

The men obeyed, as if it were the commonest thing in the world.

The coffin was of oak, and the men began to unscrew the upper lid. The humidity of the soil had rusted the screws, and it was not without effort that the coffin was opened.

Tainted odour was instantly perceptible, despite the aromatic herbs with which the body was bestrewn.

"Oh, My God! My God!" murmured Armand, turning paler than before.

The workmen themselves recoiled. A large white shroud covered the body, and left visible most of its outlines. This shroud was completely decayed, *or gnawed*, at one corner, and left exposed a naked foot of the deceased.

I was nearly overpowered ; and even while I write these lines, the recollection of this scene comes back upon me, in all its horrible reality.

"Make haste!" exclaimed the commissary. One of the men extended his hand, and lifting a corner of the shroud, suddenly exposed the face of the dead.

It was horrible to see : it is horrible to relate!

Of the eyes, there remained but two empty sockets. The lips had disappeared, and the white teeth, closed over each other, glared fearfully upon the view. The long black hair was laid in masses over the temples, and veiled partially the disclosed cavities of the cheeks ; yet, notwithstanding all this, I recognised in this visage, the joyous countenance of white and rose which I had so often admired.

Armand, without being able to take his eyes from this terrible spectacle, had placed his handkerchief to his mouth, and was biting it.

It seemed to me, that a band of iron encircled my brow,—a veil covered my eyes,—there was a ringing in my ears,—and all that I could do, was to open a smelling-bottle, which I had brought half accidentally, and inhale violently the salts which it contained.

In the midst of this sort of trance, I heard the commissary say to M. Duval, "Do you identify the deceased?"

"Yes," replied the young man, almost inaudibly.

"Then close the coffin and bring it away."

The workmen replaced the linen upon the visage of the deceased,—closed the coffin,—took it by either end, and moved towards the spot which had been designated.

Armand did not move.

His eyes were riveted upon the empty grave. He was pale as the corpse which we had just beheld. He seemed like one petrified.

I anticipated what must come, when the extremity of his excitement should be somewhat diminished by the absence of the fearful object which had sustained it.

I approached the commissary and said—

"Is the presence of this gentleman any longer necessary?"

"No," said he; "and I even counsel you to take him away, for he seems unwell."

"Come!" said I to Armand, at the same time taking his arm.

"What?" said he; gazing at me, without recognising me.

"All is over," added I. "You really must come home, my friend; you are pale and cold. You will kill yourself, if you indulge in these violent emotions."

"You are right,—let us go," replied he, mechanically; but without moving a step.

I seized him by the arm and drew him along.

He allowed himself to be led like an infant, murmuring only, from time to time, as if half to himself:—

"Did you see those eyes?"

He then turned away, as if that horrible vision was again present to his view.

Meantime his walk became slower; he seemed no longer to advance except by twitches; his teeth chattered, his hands were icy cold, and a violent nervous trembling spread over his whole frame.

I spoke to him, but he did not answer.

All that he could do, was to allow himself to be led.

At the gate of the cemetery we found our carriage. It was time.

Hardly had I placed him within, when the shuddering increased, and he experienced a complete nervous attack,—amidst which the fear of alarming me made him murmur, as he pressed my hand,—

"It is nothing, it is nothing; only, I wish I could weep."

And I heard his chest heave, while his eyes became bloodshot; but tears refused to flow.

I made him inhale the smelling-salts, and by the time we reached his house, only the ague continued to be perceptible.

With the help of the servant, I got him into bed. I caused a large fire to be kindled in his chamber; and I ran to seek my physician, to whom I recounted what had passed, as I brought him back with me.

Armand's face was now purple, and he was delirious; uttering only incoherent words, through which the name of Marguerite alone could be heard distinctly.

"Well?" said I to the doctor, when he had examined the patient.

"Well," replied he, "he has a brain-fever,—neither more nor less,—and it is fortunate; for I believe (Heaven forgive me!) that he would, otherwise, have become insane. Now, the physical malady will conquer the mental; and in another month he will be cured of both, I trust."

CHAPTER VII.

Diseases like that with which Armand was attacked have at least this advantage, that they kill quickly, or allow themselves to be quickly conquered. There is no long suspense.

A fortnight after the occurrence of the events already narrated, Armand was in a state of convalescence; and he and I were united in an intimate friendship. I had scarcely quitted his chamber during the time that his illness had lasted.

Spring had begun to scatter in profusion her flowers and her leaves; birds hovered around; and the window of my new friend's apartment opened pleasantly upon a garden, the cheering odours of which mounted to refresh us.

The doctor had permitted him to rise, and we often sat conversing beside the open window, at the hour when the warmth of the air rendered it not imprudent for him to do so.

I carefully avoided all mention of Marguerite, dreading lest her name should awaken a fresh memory of grief in the breast of the invalid, despite his apparent calmness; but on this occasion Armand himself spoke of her, and seemed to take a pleasure in so doing; not, as formerly, with tears

in his eyes. but with a gentle sigh, which re-assured me as to the state of his mind.

I had remarked that after his last visit to the cemetery, and after the spectacle which had produced so violent a crisis in his condition, the severity of his mental suffering seemed to have succumbed to his malady; and the death of Marguerite no longer appeared to him in the same distressing aspect as before. A sort of consolation seemed to have resulted from the *certainty* which he had acquired; and to drive away the last image which presented itself to his memory, he sought to recall the souvenirs of his intercourse with Marguerite, and seemed unwilling to dwell upon anything more recent.

He had obstinately refused to inform his family of his danger; and when he had recovered, his father was still ignorant of his illness.

One evening we had remained at the window later than usual. The weather had been superb, and the sun was setting amid a twilight glowing with azure and gold.

Although we were in Paris, the verdure which surrounded us appeared to shut us out from the world; and only at rare intervals did even the noise of some distant carriage disturb our conversation.

"It was about this time of the year, and on the evening of a day like this, that I first became acquainted with Marguerite," said Armand, after a pause, following the train of his own thoughts, and, paying no attention to what I had last remarked.

I made no reply.

Presently he turned again towards me and said, "I must tell you this story. You will be able to make a book of it, which no one will believe, but which it may perhaps interest you to write."

"You shall tell it to me hereafter, my friend," said I, "you are not yet strong enough for such an effort."

"The evening is warm," said he, smiling; "I have eaten my wing of chicken, I have no fever, we have nothing to do, and I am going to tell you all about it."

Well, if you insist, so be it. I listen."

"It is a very simple story," added he; "but I must

tell it to you in the order in which the events occurred If you make anything of it by and by, you can tell them in your own way."

The following is the story as he related it, and I have changed scarcely a word of the touching recital.

Yes! resumed Armand, (letting his head recline upon the back of his easy chair), yes! it was such an evening as this. I had passed the day in the country with one of my friends, Gaston de R——. In the evening we returned to Paris, and not knowing what to do with ourselves, we dropped in at the Théâtre des Variétés. Between the acts we stepped into the lobby, and there we passed a tall lady to whom my friend bowed."

"Whom did you bow to, then?" demanded I.

"To Marguerite Gautier," said he.

"She seems to me much changed, for I did not recognise her," replied I, with an emotion which I will explain presently.

"She has been very ill. The poor girl will not last long," said he.

"I remember these words as if they had been spoken only yesterday!

You must know, my friend, (continued Armand to me), "that two years previously the sight of this girl, whenever I had encountered her, had produced a strange impression upon me. Without knowing why, I had always turned pale and trembled. One of my friends, who is an amateur of the occult sciences, declared that it was "an affinity of fluids," a "magnetic sympathy," which I experienced; but I believe, simply, that I was destined to fall in love with Marguerite, and that I had a presentiment of the fact and its consequences.

"Certain it is that she had affected me very remarkably, and several of my friends had observed it, and had laughed loudly at my expense on account of it.

"The first time I ever saw her was in the Place de la Bourse, at the door of Suisse's warehouse. An open calèche

stopped there, and a lady dressed in white descended from it. A murmur of admiration had attended her entrance into the shop. For my part, I remained fixed to the spot from the moment of her entrance until she came out again.

"Through the window I saw her select in the shop the articles which she had come to purchase. I could have entered, of course, but I dared not. I did not know who she was, and I feared she might divine my object and be offended.

"She was elegantly dressed, wearing a muslin dress with ample folds; an Indian shawl, with corners embroidered in silk and gold; a bonnet of Italian straw; and a single bracelet, composed of that massive chain of gold which had then just become fashionable.

"She re-entered her carriage and drove away. One of the shopmen was standing at the door, following with his eyes the carriage of his lovely customer. I approached him and asked her name.

"'That is Mademoiselle Marguerite Gautier,' replied he.

"I hesitated to ask her address, and went away without farther information.

"The memory of this vision—for such it seemed—did not pass away, as so many had done before; and I continued to seek everywhere for this 'White Lady,' so regally beautiful.

"Some days afterwards a grand performance took place at the Opéra Comique. I went. The first person whom I beheld, sitting in one of the proscenium boxes, was Marguerite Gautier.

"The young friend who was with me recognized her also; for he said, as he pointed her out to me by name, 'See that lovely girl!'

"At that instant Marguerite, turning her lorgnette in our direction, saw my friend, smiled, and made him a sign to pay a visit to her box.

"'I shall go and say good evening to her,' said he, 'and will return instantly.'

"I could not forbear to say to him, 'You are very fortunate.'

"'Why?'

"'To know that lady.'

"'Are you in love with her?'

"'No, indeed,' said I; but I felt my colour rising, because, although I did not exactly like to say so, I felt a strong desire to make her acquaintance.

"'Come with me,' said he; 'I will introduce you.'

"'Ask her permission first, then.'

"'Oh, *pardieu!* it is not necessary to be so particular with her. Come along.'

"This remark and its tone pained me in spite of myself. I dreaded to acquire the certainty, that Marguerite was unworthy of the feeling which she had awakened in me.

"There is a work of Alphone Karr's called *Am Rauchen*, in which the hero one evening follows a beautiful girl, with whose loveliness he has been completely captivated at first sight. He feels that he would risk anything to even kiss the hand of this girl; and entertains so delicate a sentiment for her, that he fancies it almost sacrilege to steal a glance at the ankle which she displays in lifting her dress to avoid contact with the earth.

"While he is dreaming of all that he would dare or do to possess this woman, she suddenly stops at the corner of a street, and as he approaches, invites him to come to her apartment.

"He turns away, crosses the street, and takes his way home, sad and disenchanted.

"I remembered this story, and I feared that my own experience might be similar; that this girl would accept me too readily, and give too freely the love for which I was ready to make almost any sacrifice.

"It is thus with us men; and it is fortunate that the imagination thus idealises the sense, and that our corporeal desires make this concession to the dreams of the soul.

"But in truth had any one said to me, 'You shall win this woman to-night, and shall be killed to-morrow,' I should have accepted the offer; but had I been told, 'Pay two louis, and you shall be her avowed lover,' I should refused, and grieved like a child who finds vanish

at his waking the castle of delight which he had seen in his dreams.

Nevertheless, I wished to know her. It was a means, and indeed the only one, of forming an actual judgment about her.

I said accordingly to my friend that I insisted upon his having her permission to introduce me, before I would accompany him; and I rambled about the lobby thinking to myself that a moment hence I should meet her, and that I did not know with what countenance I should face her glance. I even sought to study beforehand what I should say to her.

To what a sublimity of childishness does love attain!

A moment afterwards my friend returned.

"She expects us," said he.

"Is she alone?" asked I.

"With another lady."

"There are no men?"

"No."

"Come, then."

My friend directed his steps towards the door of the theatre.

"Halloo!" said I, "this is not the way."

"Oh, we are going to buy some *bonbons*. She asked me for them."

We entered a confectioner's shop in the Opera Arcade. I was ready to buy the whole shop, and began to see with what we could fill the bag, when [illegible] friend asked for a pound of sugared raisins (*raisins glacés*).

"Do you know if she likes them?"

"It is well known that she never touches any other kind."

"Ah!" continued he as we returned, "do you know to what sort of a girl I am going to introduce you? Now do not imagine that it is to a duchess—it is simply to a girl who lives under 'protection.' In fact, she is most thoroughly 'protected;' so do not be embarrassed, but say whatever comes into your head."

I stammered an assent, and followed him, saying to myself that I was about to be cured of my passion.

As we entered the box, Marguerite was laughing loudly. I could have wished her to be sad.

My friend presented me. Marguerite saluted me by a slight inclination of the head, and said,—

"And my *bonbons?*"

"Here they are!"

As she took them she looked at me. I lowered my eyes involuntarily and coloured.

She leaned toward the ear of her companion, said a few words in a whisper, and then both burst into laughter.

Beyond doubt, I was the subject of their merriment. My embarrassment was redoubled.

At this time I had for my mistress a little shop-girl, very sentimental and affectionate, whose sentiment and whose letters had often made me laugh. I comprehended now, however, what I must have made her suffer, by what I was enduring myself; and for full five minutes I loved her as never man loved woman!

Marguerite eat her raisins, without troubling herself further about me.

My introducer was not disposed, however, to leave me in this ridiculous position.

"Marguerite," said he, "you must not be surprised that M. Duval does not speak to you. You overpower him so completely that he cannot say a word."

"I think, rather," returned she, "that he has accompanied you, because you thought it would be tedious to come here alone."

"If that were true," said I, in turn, "I should not have begged Ernest to ask your permission to bring me."

"Oh! that was, perhaps, only one way of retarding the fatal moment."

Little as one may know of this class of females, one is aware of the pleasure they take in quizzing, and making sport of young men whom they see for the first time. It is, nodoubt, a sort of revenge for the humiliations to which

they are compelled to submit at the hands of those whom they see daily.

It is necessary, therefore, in order to answer them successfully, to possess a certain knowledge of their "world," a knowledge which I did not possess. Besides which, the "ideal" which I had formed of Marguerite, rendered this raillery of hers more painful to me. Nothing seemed indifferent to me on the part of this woman.

I rose, therefore, saying, with an alteration of voice which I could not wholly disguise,—

"If such is your opinion of me, Madame, it only remains for me to ask pardon for my indiscretion, and to take my leave, with the assurance that I shall not intrude again."

I bowed and took my departure.

Hardly had I closed the door, when I heard another outburst of laughter; I only wished some one would jostle me at that moment!

I returned to my stall.

The "knock" sounded for the rising of the curtain.*

Ernest returned to his stall by my side.

"How you behaved yourself!" said he, as he seated himself. "They thought you were mad!"

"What said Marguerite when I came away?"

"She laughed, and declared she had never seen such a queer fellow. But you must not stand still to be beaten; nor should you do such girls the honour to take what they say seriously. They do not know what elegance and politeness are. They are like dogs on whom one puts perfumes, and who find the smell so bad that they roll themselves in the dirt to get rid of it."

"After all, what does it matter?" said I, endeavouring to assume an indifferent tone, "I shall never see her again; and although I was pleased with her before I knew her, it is very different now I have met her."

* In most of the continental theatres, the signals for the orchestra and the rising of the curtain, are given by a *knock* instead of a bell.—TRANSLATOR.

"Bah! I don't despair of seeing you sometimes at the back of her box, and to hear that you are ruining yourself for her. Meantime you are right. She is ill-mannered; but she would be a splendid mistress to have for all that."

Luckily the curtain rose, and Ernest was silent. For me to say what was played would be impossible. All that I remember is, that from time to time I raised my eyes to the box which I had quitted so abruptly, and that the faces of fresh visitors succeeded each other every moment.

I was far from thinking no more of Marguerite. Another feeling, however, had taken possession of me. It seemed to me that I had her ridicule to punish, if it cost me all that I possessed. I would conquer this girl, and have the *right* to take the place which I had just now abandoned so suddenly.

Before the close of the performance, Marguerite and her friend left their box.

Almost in spite of myself I left my stall.

"You are going?" said Ernest, surprised.

"Yes."

"Why?"

At this moment he perceived that Marguerite's box was empty, and exclaimed,—

"Go! Go, by all means; and good fortune to you; nay, *better* than good!"

I went.

I heard on the stairs the rustling of dresses and the sound of voices. I stepped aside, and without being seen, I saw the two ladies pass, with the two gentlemen who formed their escort.

Under the portico of the theatre a little page was in waiting.

"Go and tell the coachman to wait at the door of the Café Anglais," said Marguerite; "we will walk as far as that."

Some minutes afterwards, in rambling on the Boulevard, I observed, at the window of one of the private rooms of the restaurant, Marguerite, leaning over the balcony, and plucking to pieces one of the camelias of her bouquet.

One of the gentlemen was leaning on her shoulder, and speaking to her in a low tone.

I went and installed myself at a restaurant opposite, and never lost sight of the window in question.

At one o'clock in the morning, Marguerite entered her carriage with her three friends.

I took a cab and followed.

The carriage stopped at No. 9, Rue d'Antin.

Marguerite descended and entered her house alone.

This was doubtless accidental; but the "accident" made me very happy.

After that day I frequently met Marguerite at the theatres or in the Champs Elysées. Always the same gaiety on her part,—the same emotion on mine.

A fortnight, however, elapsed on one occasion, without my seeing her at all. I encountered Gaston, and asked him for news of her.

"The poor girl is very ill," said he.

"What is the matter?"

"Some affection of the lungs; and as she has not led the sort of life to cure herself, she is confined to her bed, and it is said she must die."

The heart is a strange medley! I was not altogether unwilling that she *should* die!

I went, however, daily, to inquire after her health (without leaving my name); and I thus learned her convalescence and her departure for Bagnères.

Time passed; the impression, if not the memory, was gradually fading from my heart. I travelled. Flirtations, occupation, change of habits, took the place of this one idea; and when I thought of it at all, I *would* see in it only one of those fancies which one has in extreme youth, and at which one laughs a few years afterwards.

Still I had not the merit of really conquering this passion; for I had lost sight of Marguerite, and when I saw her again (as I tell you) in the lobby of the theatre, I did not recognise her.

She wore a veil, it is true; but veil herself as she would, two years before, I should have had no need to see

her in order to recognise her; I should have divined her presence by instinct.

Time and separation, however, had not so banished her image as to prevent my heart from beating tumultuously when I knew that it was she; and the two years which had passed without my seeing her, and the effect which I had imagined to be produced by this separation, vanished together at the mere touch of her robe.

CHAPTER VIII.

Nevertheless (continued Armand, after a pause), while understanding, quite well, that I was still in love, I felt myself more resolute than before; and in my desire to resume my acquaintance with Marguerite, I flattered myself that I wished only for the opportunity of showing her that I had become superior to her caprices.

What routes the heart takes, and what excuses it fabricates, to arrive at what it desires!

After Marguerite had passed me in the lobby, on the occasion which I have named, I returned to my stall,—throwing a rapid glance at the boxes to see where she was seated.

She was in one of the boxes of the ground-tier, and alone. She was much changed, as I have told you. I no longer discovered upon her lip, her former habitual smile of contemptuous indifference. She had evidently suffered, and seemed to suffer still.

Although it was April, she was still in winter-dress, and wrapped in velvets.

I looked so fixedly at her, that my gaze at length attracted her notice.

She regarded me for some little time, took her glass to examine me more closely, and thought apparently that she recognised me, without being certain who I was; for when she withdrew her lorgnette, a smile,—that charming

salutation of which women make use,—played upon her lips, in readiness to respond to the recognition which she seemed to expect from me; but I made no answering sign, being resolved to have the advantage, and seem to forget when she had remembered.

She fancied herself mistaken about me, and presently turned away again. The curtain rose.

I have seen Marguerite many times at the theatre, and I have never seen her pay the least attention to the performance.

As to myself, the play interested me, also, little enough; and I occupied myself with her alone, but taking special precautions to prevent her from observing that I did so.

In watching her thus, I noticed that she exchanged looks from time to time, with a lady who occupied the box opposite to her own. I turned my eyes towards this box, and recognised a person with whom I was well acquainted.

This woman had formerly been *une femme entretenue*,* who had afterwards essayed to become an actress; but failing in the attempt, and counting upon her acquaintance with the gay world of Paris, had established herself in trade as a milliner.

I saw at once, in her, a means of meeting with Marguerite; and I profited by a moment when she happened to look towards me, to give her a bow of recognition.

As I anticipated, she made me a sign to come to her box.

Prudence Duvernoy—such was the happy name of the *modiste*—was one of those fat women of forty, with whom one does not need to exercise any great amount of diplomacy, to make them say what one wants to know, espe-

* It is simply impossible to render this term in English without a grossness of expression, which does not attach to it in the French, or else a vast deal of circumlocution, and I shall therefore retain it, henceforward, in the original. It is hardly necessary to add, that it signifies a lady who is under the "protection" of a gentleman.—TRANSLATOR.

cially when what one wishes to know is as simple a matter as was mine, in this instance.

I seized a moment when she was again exchanging signs with Marguerite, to say to her :—

"Who are you looking at?"

"Marguerite Gautier."

"You know her?"

"Yes, I am her milliner, and she is my nearest neighbour."

"You live then in the Rue d'Antin?"

"At No. 7. The window of her dressing-room looks into the window of mine."

"They say she is a charming girl?"

"Don't you know her?"

"No, but I should like to do so."

"Would you like me to ask her to come into our box?"

"No; I should prefer you to present me to her first."

"At her own house?"

"Yes."

"That is more difficult."

"How so?"

"Because she is 'protected' by an old Duke, who is very jealous."

"*Protected?* How charmingly delicate!"

"Yes, *protected* is the very word. The poor old man would find it difficult, I fancy, to be her lover!"

And Prudence then told me how Marguerite had met with the Duke at Bagnères.

"That, then, is the reason why she is here alone?" I demanded.

"Precisely."

"But who will take her home?"

"The Duke."

"He is coming for her, then?"

"Directly."

"And you, who takes *you* home?"

"Nobody."

"I offer *my* services."

"But you are with a friend?"

"We both offer ourselves then."

"But who is your friend?"

"He is a charming fellow, very witty, and will be enchanted to make your acquaintance."

"Capital! It is agreed, then. We will all leave after this piece, for I know the next one."

"Willingly. I will go and inform my friend."

"Go, then."

"Ah!" exclaimed Prudence, at this moment, "see! there is the Duke, entering Marguerite's box."

I looked.

A man of some seventy years of age had just seated himself behind the young girl, and handed her a bag of *bonbons*.

Marguerite began conversing with the Duke.

I went to the stalls to acquaint Gaston with the arrangement, which I had made for him and myself.

He assented.

We quitted our stalls, to ascend to Madame Duvernoy's box; but hardly had we opened the door leading from the orchestra into the lobby, when we were obliged to pause, to allow Marguerite and the Duke to pass, as they were leaving the theatre.

I would have given two years of my life, to be in the place of the worthy old gentleman!

On reaching the street, he handed Marguerite into a phaeton, which he himself drove; and they disappeared at the full trot of a pair of superb horses.

We entered the box of Prudence. When the piece was finished, we took a fiacre, which carried us to No. 7, Rue d'Antin. At the door of her house, Prudence invited us to enter in order to see her show rooms, of which she was notably proud. You can judge how readily we consented.

It appeared to me, that I was gradually drawing nearer to Marguerite. I soon led the conversation in her direction.

"The old Duke is with your fair neighbour, I suppose," said I to Prudence.

"No, she must be alone."

"But she must be horribly dull, then," said Gaston.

"We pass most of our evenings together, or when she returns home she calls me," said Prudence. "She never goes to bed before two o'clock in the morning. She cannot sleep earlier."

"Why?"

"Because she has an affection of the chest, and is almost always feverish."

"She has no lovers, then?" asked I.

"I never see any one remain when I leave her; but I cannot answer for it that no one comes after I am gone. I often meet there in the evening a certain Count N——, who fancies that he advances his suit by paying visits at eleven o'clock at night, and by sending her as much jewellery as she can wish; but she does not seem to be captivated. She is wrong, however, for he is very rich. I have said to her again and again,—'My dear child, this is the very man you want.' But she who ordinarily listens to what I say, turns her back upon me, and says, 'He is too stupid.'

"I admit that he is stupid; but he could give her a position, whereas this poor old Duke may die any day. Old men are selfish; and his family are eternally reproaching him for his connection with Marguerite—two reasons why he will leave her nothing. I reason with her, in fact, about these things; and she answers, that 'it will be quite time enough to take the Count when the Duke is dead."

"Indeed," continued Prudence, "it is not altogether amusing to live as she does. I know it would not suit *me*, and I should send the old gentleman walking very speedily! He is insipid, that old chap! He calls her his daughter, and takes care of her as if she were a child. He is always at her heels, in fact. I am sure that at this very moment one of his servants is stalking up and down the street, to see who goes out; and especially who goes in."

"Ah! poor Marguerite!" said Gaston, as he sat himself

down at the piano and began playing a waltz. "I did not know all this; although I observed that she seemed less cheerful of late."

"Hush!" said Prudence, suddenly.

Gaston paused.

"She calls me, I think."

We listened. Some one *did* call Prudence.

"Now then, gentlemen, be off with you," said Prudence.

"Ah! this is the way you practise hospitality!" said Gaston, laughing. "Now we shall go when it suits us."

"Why should we go?" added I.

"I am going to Marguerite."

"We will wait your return."

"That is impossible."

"We will go with you."

"Worse and worse."

"I know Marguerite," said Gaston; "and I am quite justified in paying her a visit."

"But M. Duval does not know her."

"I will introduce him."

"It is out of the question!"

We again heard Marguerite's voice, calling Prudence. The latter ran to her dressing-room and opened the window. I followed with Gaston.

We placed ourselves so as not to be seen from without.

"I have been calling you these ten minutes," said Marguerite from her window, in a rather angry tone.

"What do you want of me?"

"I wish you to come to me directly."

"Why?"

"Because the Count de N—— is still here, and wearies me to death."

"But I can't come just now."

"What prevents you?"

"I have two young gentlemen here who won't go."

"Tell them you have to go out."

"I have told them so already."

"Very well! Then leave them. When they find you gone, they will soon go."

"Yes! after turning everything topsy-turvy."

"But what do they want?"

"They wish to see *you*."

"Who are they?"

"You know one of them—M. Gaston R——."

"Oh! yes, I know him. And the other?"

"M. Armand Duval. You do not know him?'

"No. But bring them all the same. Anything rather than the Count. I wait for you. Come at once."

Marguerite closed her window and Prudence hers.

Marguerite, who had evidently remembered my face, did not remember my name. I would have preferred an unfavourable recollection to this total forgetfulness!

"I knew she would be enchanted to see us!" said Gaston.

"Enchanted is not the word," retorted Prudence, as she put on her shawl and bonnet; "she receives you in order to drive away the Count. Endeavour to be more agreeable than he, or Marguerite will quarrel with me for bringing you."

Prudence descended and we followed. I trembled. It seemed to me that this visit was destined to have an important influence upon my future life.

I was even more disturbed than on the evening of my introduction to Marguerite in her box at the Opéra Comique.

As we reached the door of her apartments, my heart beat so violently as to confuse my ideas.

A few random chords struck upon the piano reached our ears.

Prudence rang.

The sound of the piano ceased.

A woman, having more the air of a companion than a servant, opened the door to us.

We entered the drawing-room, and passed through to the boudoir.

A young man was leaning against the mantel-piece.

Marguerite, seated before the piano, allowed her fingers to run over the keys, and commenced fragments which she did not finish.

The aspect of the scene was that of weariness—caused to the gentleman by his own insignificance; to the lady, by the gentleman's presence.

On hearing the voice of Prudence, Marguerite rose and approached us. After bestowing a glance of acknowledgment upon Madame Duvernoy for the relief she had brought, Marguerite said to us,—

"Come in, gentlemen. You are very welcome."

CHAPTER IX.

"Good evening, my dear M. Gaston," said Marguerite to my companion. "I am very glad to see you. Why did not you come to my box, at the Variétés?"

"I was fearful of intruding."

"Friends," said Marguerite, (and she dwelt upon the word, as if to make it clear to those who were present, that Gaston was not, and never had been, anything *more* than this;) "Friends are never intruders."

"As a friend, then, will you allow me to introduce to you, M. Armand Duval?"

"I have already empowered Prudence to do so."

"Besides which, Madame," said I, bowing and endeavouring to render myself intelligible, "I have already had the honour of being presented to you."

The charming glance of Marguerite appeared to look through her memory, in the endeavour to recall where and when she might have met me; but the effort was in vain; she appeared to remember nothing.

"I am obliged to you, nevertheless, Madame," said I, "for having forgotten my former introduction; for I made myself very ridiculous on that occasion. It was two years since, at the Opéra Comique. I was with Ernest de ——."

"Ah! I remember," said Marguerite, with a smile. "It was not you who were ridiculous; it was I who was rude, as I fear I still am, sometimes. You have forgiven me, Monsieur?" And she offered me her hand, which I kissed.

"It is true," resumed she, "that I have the bad habit of wishing to embarrass people whom I see for the first time. I know it is very stupid. My doctor says that it is because I am nervous and always suffering. Pray, believe my doctor."

"But you seem very well."

"I have been very ill, nevertheless."

"I know it."

"Who told you?"

"Everybody knew it. I came frequently to inquire after you, and I heard of your recovery with pleasure."

"I never received your card."

"I never left it."

"Were you then the young gentleman who came every day to inquire after me during my illness, and who would never leave his name?"

"Yes. It was I."

"Then you were more than kind; you were generous. It is not you, Count, who would have done that," added she, turning towards M. de N.; and after having cast upon me one of those searching looks by which women form their opinion of men.

"I have only known you for two months," replied the Count.

"And this gentleman has only known me for five minutes! You do say such stupid things!"

Women are pitiless with men whom they dislike.

The Count blushed and bit his lips. I was sorry for him, for he appeared in love like myself; and the harsh candour of Marguerite must have made him very uncomfortable, particularly in the presence of strangers.

"You were playing the piano when we came in," said I, therefore, to change the conversation; "will you not do me the pleasure to treat me as an old acquaintance, and continue your music?"

"Oh!" said she, throwing herself upon the sofa, and making a sign to us to seat ourselves beside her, "Gaston knows what sort of music I make. It is good enough

when I am alone with the Count; but I have no wish to make you undergo such a penance."

"You have that preference for *me*, then?" said the Count, with a smile which he endeavoured to render ironical.

"You are wrong to reproach me with this preference, for it is the only one I manifest for you."

It seemed clear that this youth was not to say a word successfully. He cast towards her a look actually suppliant.

"Now then, Prudence," added she, "have you done what I asked you to do?"

"Yes."

"That is well. You shall tell one about it by-and-bye. I have something to say to you. You must not go until I have spoken with you."

"We are intruders, I fear," observed I, "and now that we, or rather *I*, have been presented for the second time, in order to make you forget the first, we will take our leave, Gaston and myself."

"On no account. It is not for you that I say this. On the contrary, I wish you to stay."

The Count drew an elegant watch from his pocket, and looked at the hour.

"It is time for me to go to the club," said he. Marguerite made no response. The Count quitted the fireplace.

"Adieu, Madame."

Marguerite rose. "Adieu, Count. You are going already?"

"Yes, I fear that I weary you."

"Not more than usual. When will one see you again?"

"When you permit."

"Adieu, then."

This was severe, you will allow. The Count had, happily, a good education and an excellent temper. He contented himself with kissing the hand which Marguerite, nonchalantly enough, offered him; and after saluting us, took his departure.

At the moment of passing the door, he cast a glance at

Prudence. She shrugged her shoulders, with an air which seemed to say,—

"What would you have? I have done my best for you."

"Nanine!" cried Marguerite, "show a light to the Count."

We heard the outer door open and shut.

"At last!" exclaimed Marguerite, reviving. "That youth tries my nerves horribly."

"My dearchild," said Prudence, "you are really too harsh with him; he who is so good and so considerate towards you. See still upon your chimney-piece a watch that he has given you, and which must have cost him at least a thousand francs, I am sure;" and Madame Duvernoy, who had approached the mantel-piece, played with the trinket of which she had spoken, and cast upon it most ardent looks of covetousness.

"My dear," said Marguerite, seating herself at the piano, "when I put into one scale what he gives me, and into the other what he says to me, I find that I give him my society a very great bargain."

"The poor fellow is in love with you."

"If I were bound to listen to all who are in love with me, I should not have even time to eat my dinner." And she ran her fingers a few times over the keys of the piano; after which, returning to us, she said,—

"Will you take something? *I* should like a little punch."

"And I—I could eat a little bit of chicken," said Prudence, "if we are to sup."

"That is the idea!" cried Gaston. "Let us go and sup."

"No," said Marguerite, "we are going to have supper here." She rang. Nanine appeared.

"Send for some supper."

"What must it be?"

"What you please, but immediately." Nanine went

That is it!" said Marguerite, dancing about like a

child, "We will have some supper! How wearisome that stupid Count is!"

The more I saw this girl, the more was I enchanted. She was fascinatingly beautiful. Even the spareness of her person was a grace in itself, instead of a fault.

I was lost in thought. I can hardly explain my feelings. I was full of indulgence for her mode of life, full of admiration for her beauty. The proof of an unmercenary and independent spirit, which she gave in not accepting the advances of a man—young, rich, and elegant—who was quite ready to ruin himself for her, excused, in my eyes, all her previous faults. There was a sincerity about this girl.

She was evidently still in the mere girlhood of vice. Her firm step, her flexible form, her expanded nostrils, and her large eyes lightly encircled with blue, denoted one of those ardent natures, which spread around them, as it were, a perfume of voluptuousness; like those oriental flasks, which, lightly closed as they may be, allow the escape of the perfume of the essence which they contain.

Indeed, whether it was nature, or an effect of her somewhat morbid condition of health, there seemed to glance, at times, from the eyes of this woman, a light of passion, the development of which would be a dream of heaven for him whom she should love.

But those who had loved Marguerite went for nothing in this view; and those whom she had seemed to love, for still less.

In short, one recognised in this girl the virgin whom some accident had made a courtezan, and the courtezan, of whom an accident would have made a virgin the most pure and loving. She had still pride and independence,—two sentiments which, when wounded, are capable of evolving the emotion which constitutes modesty.

While such thoughts as these were passing through my mind, I remained silent. My soul seemed to have passed into my heart, and my heart into my eyes.

"It was you, then," said she to me, suddenly, "who came to inquire after me when I was ill?"

"Yes."

"Do you know that was very pretty? and what can do to thank you?"

"Permit me to come occasionally to see you."

"As often as you please, from five to six o'clock, or from eleven o'clock till midnight.—I say, Gaston, play me the 'Invitation to the waltz.'

"Why?"

"Why? To please me, in the first instance; and, secondly, because I can't manage it myself."

"That is the difficulty?"

"The third part—the passage in sharps"

Gaston rose, went to the piano, and began that marvellous melody of Weber's, the music of which was lying open on the piano.

Marguerite, with one hand resting on the piano, read the music as he proceeded, following each note in a low tone with her voice; and when Gaston came to the passage of which she had complained, she sang it and played it, as it were, with her fingers on the back of the piano.

"Ré, mi, ré, do, ré, fa, mi, ré. There! that is what I cannot play. Once more!"

Gaston repeated the passage; after which she said,

"Now, let me try."

She sat down, and played in her turn; but her rebellious fingers tripped invariably at one of the notes above indicated.

"Now, isn't this incredible?" said she, with the genuine manner of a child, "that I cannot play that passage? Do you know, I try it sometimes for two hours? And when I think that that stupid Count plays it admirably, and without the notes!—I believe it is that which makes me furious with him."

And she began again; but always with the same result.

"The deuce take Weber, the music, and the piano!" exclaimed she, flinging the music to the other end of the room. "Can you understand that I cannot play eight sharps in succession?" And she folded her arms, and looked at us, as she stood beating the floor with her foot.

Her cheeks flushed, and a slight cough half parted her lips.

"See now!" exclaimed Prudence, who had removed her bonnet, and was arranging her hair at the glass; "see now! you are making yourself angry, and will be ill. Let us go to supper; that will be much better. As for me, I am dying of hunger."

Marguerite rang again, and then sat down to the piano, where she began singing in a low tone a song of a loose character, in the accompaniment of which she found no difficulty.

Gaston knew the song, and joining in, formed a sort of duet.

"Do not sing those vulgar songs," said I, familiarly, to Marguerite, but in a tone of entreaty.

"Oh! how virtuous you are!" said she, smiling, and at the same time giving me her hand.

"It is not on my own account, but yours."

Marguerite made a gesture, which seemed to say, "It is a long time since I have had anything to do with such simples."

At this moment, Nanine re-entered.

"Supper is ready?" demanded Marguerite.

"In one moment, Madame."

"*Apropos*," exclaimed Prudence, "you have not seen the apartment. Come, and I will show it to you."

(You know it. The salon was a marvel.)

Marguerite accompanied us a little way; then she called Gaston, and went with him into the supper-room, to see if the supper was ready.

"Look!" exclaimed Prudence, loudly, as she took from a bracket a little statuette of porcelain, "I did not know you had this little man!"

"Which?"

"A little shepherd with a bird-cage."

"Take it, if it pleases you."

"Oh! I fear to deprive you of it."

"I was about to give it to my maid; I think it hideous. But as it pleases you, I say take it."

Prudence saw only the toy, and not the manner of giving it. She put the little man aside, and led me into the drawing-room, where, showing me two miniatures hanging upon the wall, she said,

"See, here is the Count de G——, who has been terribly in love with Marguerite. It was he who brought her out. Do you know him?"

"No. And this?" said I, indicating another portrait.

"That is the little Viscount de L——. He was forced to take his leave."

"How so?"

"Because he was nearly ruined. Oh! he *was* a lover of Marguerite!"

"And, doubtless, she loved him also."

"She is such an odd girl, one never knows what to think. The evening of the day of his departure, she was at the theatre as usual. And yet she had wept at the moment of his leaving."

At this moment Nanine came again to announce supper.

When we entered the supper-room, Marguerite was leaning against the wall, and Gaston, holding both her hands, was addressing her in a low tone.

"You are mad!" said Marguerite. "You know that I won't have anything to say to you. It is not after knowing a girl like me for two years that one asks to be her lover. We girls, we give ourselves at first, or never. Come, gentlemen, to supper."

And escaping from the hands of Gaston, Marguerite made him sit at her right, and myself at her left. Then she said to Nanine,

"Before you sit down, give orders, if any one rings, to admit no one."

This precautionary order was given at one o'clock in the morning!

We laughed, and drank, and eat heartily at this supper. In a few minutes merriment had attained its height; and those words which are considered amusing by a certain class, but which soil the lips of those that utter them, were heard from time to time, amid shouts of laughter from

Prudence, from Nanine, and from Marguerite. Gaston gave himself up to the spirit of the hour; he was a young fellow full of heart, but whose mind had been somewhat falsified by his earlier habits.

At one moment I was half inclined to harden myself—make my thoughts and feelings indifferent to what was passing, and take part in the surrounding gaiety—but, little by little, I found myself isolated from the noise. My glass remained full, and I had become almost sad, in regarding this beautiful creature of twenty, who drank, talked like a porter, and laughed all the louder in proportion to the broadness of the jest which was passing.

Nevertheless, this gaiety, this mode of speaking and drinking, which would have appeared to me, in others, the result of dissipation, almost of debauchery, seemed to me, in Marguerite's case, the result of a feverish desire for forgetfulness; or of great nervous irritability.

At each glass of champagne her cheeks reddened with a feverish glow: and the cough, which was slight at the beginning of the supper, had become at length strong enough to force her to lean her head upon the back of her chair, and compress her chest in her hands every time the fit seized her.

I sighed to think of the injury that every day of such excess must inflict upon that frail organisation. At last, a crisis arrived, which I had foreseen and dreaded.

Towards the close of the supper, Marguerite was seized with a violent fit of coughing. It seemed as if her chest would be torn in pieces with the convulsion. The poor girl became purple, closed her eyes with the pain, and pressed her napkin to her lips. As she removed it, it was stained with a gush of blood. She rose, and ran into her dressing-room.

"What is the matter with Marguerite?" exclaimed Gaston.

"She has laughed too much, and is raising blood," said Prudence. "Oh! it will be nothing. It happens to her every day. Leave her alone; she likes that best."

But I could not take this view of the matter; and to the great amazement of Prudence and Nanine, who loudly called me back, I went to join Marguerite.

CHAPTER X.

The chamber in which she had taken refuge was lighted by only a single candle placed upon a table. Thrown back upon a large sofa, with her dress unfastened, she pressed one hand to her chest, while the other drooped listlessly by her side. On the table was a silver basin, half filled with water; this water was streaked with jets of blood.

Marguerite, pale and with lips apart, was panting for breath. At times her chest heaved with a prolonged sigh, the exhalation of which seemed to relieve her somewhat, and to give her a few minutes of ease.

I approached her without any movement on her part; seated myself beside her, and took the hand which drooped upon the sofa.

"Ah! it is you!" said she, smiling.

My countenance must have betrayed my distress, for she added:—

"Are you ill also?"

"No; but you? You suffer still?"

"But little;" and she dried with her handkerchief the tears which the cough had brought to her eyes. "I am accustomed to this now."

"You will kill yourself, Madame," said I, with a voice which showed my emotion. "I wish I were your friend, or your relative, to prevent you from injuring yourself thus."

"Oh! it is not really worth the trouble of alarming yourself about," replied she, with some bitterness. "See how the others concern themselves about me! They know that nothing can be done for me."

After which she rose, and taking the candle, placed it upon the mantle-piece, and looked at herself in the glass.

"How pale I am!" said she, as she refastened her dress, and passed her fingers through her dishevelled hair. "Well, never mind! Let us return to the table. Will you come?"

But I was seated, and I did not stir.

She understood the emotion which this scene had caused me; for she approached, and offering me her hand, said—

"There now; come!"

I took her hand, and raising it to my lips, dropped upon it, despite myself, a tear, which I had long suppressed.

"What! are you a child, then?" said she, reseating herself beside me; "you are weeping! What is the matter?"

"I must seem to you very silly; but what I have just seen has grieved me sadly."

"You are very kind. But what would you have? I can't sleep, and I must amuse myself in some way. And besides, girls like me,—one more or one less,—what does it matter? The doctors tell me that the blood which I raise comes from my throat. I pretend to believe them; that is the most I can do for them."

"Listen to me, Marguerite," exclaimed I, with a warmth which I could not repress. "I do not know the influence which you are destined to exercise upon my career; but this I know,—that, at this moment, there is no one, not even my sister, for whom I interest myself as for you. It has been so, ever since I first saw you. I entreat you, then, to take care of yourself, and not persist in living as you do."

"If I were to take care of myself, I should die. That which alone sustains me is the feverish life which I lead. Besides, to 'take care of one's self,' is very well for ladies in society, who have family and friends; but we, from the moment that we care no longer, minister to the vanity or the pleasure of our lovers, they abandon us, and long days are succeeded by longer nights. I know it well, for I have been for two months confined to my bed; after the first three weeks, no one came near me."

"It is true, that I am nothing to you," I replied; "but if you are willing that I should tend you like a brother, I will not leave you, and I will cure you. Then, when you

have recovered your strength, you shall, if you please, resume the life that you now lead; but I am confident, that you would much prefer a tranquil existence, which would render you more happy and preserve your beauty."

"You think thus to-night, because the wine has made you melancholy; but you would not have the patience of which you boast."

"Permit me to remind you, Marguerite, you have been ill for two months; and that during those two months, I called every day to inquire after you."

"That is true; but why did you not come up?"

"Because I was not then acquainted with you."

"Do people stand upon ceremony with a girl like me?"

"One should always be respectful towards a lady; at least, such is my doctrine."

"And so you will nurse me?"

"Yes."

"You will stay with me every day?"

"Yes."

"And every night also?"

"At all times that I do not annoy you."

"And what do you call that?"

"Devotedness."

"And whence comes this devotedness?"

"From an irresistible sympathy which I feel for you."

"You are in love with me, then? Say so at once; it is much simpler."

"It is possible that I am so; but if I am destined to tell you so at some time or other, it is not to-day."

"You will do better never to tell me so."

"Why?"

"Because there can result from such an avowal but two things."

"And those ——?"

"Are, that either I do not accept you, and you are angry,—or I *do* accept you, and you have a melancholy mistress; a woman who is nervous, sickly, and sad,—or gay with a gaiety more melancholy than sadness itself; a woman who raises blood from her lungs, and who spends 100,000

francs a year, which is very well for a nice old man like the Duke; but very unsuitable for a young man like you; the proof of which is, that all the young lovers that I have had, have very soon left me."

I made no answer; I listened. This frankness, which was almost a confession,—this unhappy life, of which I caught a glimpse, through the gilded veil which covered it, and from the reality of which the poor girl sought refuge in dissipation, excess, and late hours,—all this impressed me so deeply, that I could not utter a word.

"Come!" continued Marguerite, "we are talking nonsense. Give me your hand, and let us return to the supper-room. They will be wondering at our absence."

"Do you return, if it please you to do so; but I ask your permission to remain here."

"Why?"

"Because your gaiety distresses me."

"Very well then, I will be sad."

"Listen, Marguerite: allow me to say to you something that you have, no doubt, heard very often, and to which the habit of hearing it may indispose you to give faith; but which is, nevertheless, true, and which I shall, perhaps, never repeat to you."

"And that is—?" said she, with a smile with which young mother listens to some folly of her child.

"That is, that since I have seen you, I do not know now nor why, but you have taken a place in my life; it is that I have repeatedly driven your image from my thoughts, but it has constantly returned; it is that to-day, when I met you, after two years had elapsed without my seeing you, you assumed a still more complete ascendancy over my heart and mind; it is, finally, that now that you have received me, now that I know you—now that I perceive all that is remarkable in your character, you have become indispensable to me, and that I shall become mad, not only if you do not love me, but if you do not allow me to love you."

"But, unhappy man that you are, I must say to you, like Madame D., 'You are very rich, then?' But you do not know that I expend six or seven thousand francs a

month, and that this expenditure has become necessary to my existence? You do not realise, then, my poor friend, that I should ruin you in an incredibly short time, and that your family would cast you off, for living with a creature such as I am. Love me if you will—love me as a dear friend; but not otherwise. Come to see me—we will laugh and talk; but do not exaggerate to yourself the little that I am worth; for I am, really, not worth much. You have a good heart, you need some one to love you; you are too young, and have too much feeling to live in our world. Make love to a married woman! You see that I am a good girl, and that I speak to you frankly."

"Ah! there now! What the deuce are you about, there?" cried Prudence, whose approach we had not remarked, and who appeared at the door of the room, with her hair in disorder, and her dress disarranged. (I recognised in this disorder, the hand of my friend Gaston.")

"We are talking sense," said Marguerite. "Leave us for a moment, and we will join you presently."

"Oh! very well, very well! talk away, my children," said Prudence, withdrawing and closing the door, as if to add force to the tone with which she had pronounced these last words.

"It is agreed, then," said Marguerite, when we were alone, "you are not to love me any longer?"

"I will go away."

"Has it reached that point?"

I had advanced too far to retreat; and besides, this girl attracted me irresistibly. This mixture of gaiety, of sadness, of candour, and of irregular life; even this illness, which developed at once her susceptibility of feeling, and her nervous excitability; all this made me feel, that if, from the first moment, I did not assume the empire over this fitful and spiritual temperament, she was lost to me for ever.

"Come, now," said she, "is all this in earnest, that you are saying?"

"Perfectly so."

"But why did you not say it sooner?"

"When could I have said it?"

"The day after being introduced to me at the Opéra Comique."

"I think that you would have received me anything but agreeably, if I had called to see you then."

"Why so?"

"Because I had been stupid, on the previous day."

"That is true. But, nevertheless, you already loved, even at that time?"

"Yes."

"Which did not, however, prevent you from going home to bed, and sleeping very tranquilly, after the performance. We know what these 'grand passions' are!"

"But it is you who are mistaken. Do you know what I really did on the night of the Opéra Comique?"

"No."

"I followed you to the door of the Café Anglais, waited there, and followed thence the carriage which contained you and your three friends; and when I saw you enter your own house alone, I was very happy."

Marguerite began to laugh.

"Why are you laughing?"

"At nothing."

"Tell me, I entreat you; or I shall believe that you are still mocking me."

"You will not be angry?"

"What right have I to be so?"

"Well then, if you must know, I had a good reason for entering alone."

"And that was —?"

"Some one was waiting for me."

Had she given me a blow with a dagger, I had not felt the wound more severely. I rose, and offering her my hand,—

"Adieu!" said I.

"I knew very well that you would be annoyed," said she. "Men are wild to learn just that which will vex them most."

"But I assure you," added I, coldly, and to prove that I was for ever cured of my passion,— "I assure you that I

am not angry. It was very natural that some one should be waiting for you, and it is also very natural that I should take my leave at three o'clock in the morning."

"Have you then, also, some one waiting for you at home?"

"No; but I must go."

"Adieu, then."

"You dismiss me?"

"Not the least in the world."

"Why then do you pain me thus?"

"What pain have I given you?"

"You tell me that some one was waiting for you."

"I could not help laughing at the idea that you were so delighted at seeing me return home alone, when there was so good a reason for it."

"One often makes a pleasure of a weakness, and it is cruel to destroy that pleasure, when, by allowing it to continue, the person who enjoys it is rendered happier than before."

"But with whom, then, do you fancy that you have to do? I am neither a virgin nor a duchess. I have only made your acquaintance to-day, and owe you no account of my actions. Admitting that I might, one day, become your mistress, you must very well know that I have had other lovers than yourself. If you make 'scenes' of jealousy beforehand, what would it be afterwards—if the 'afterwards' should ever exist? I never saw such a man!"

"That is because no one has ever loved you as I love you."

"Come now, frankly,—you really love me so very much?"

"As much as it is possible to love, I think."

"And this has continued since —?"

"Since one day when I saw you descend from a caléche and enter Suisse's shop, some three years ago."

"Do you know that this is very pretty of you? And what must I do to show my gratitude for so much love?"

"You must endeavour to love me a little," said I, with a palpitation of the heart which almost prevented me from

speaking; for, despite the half-sarcastic smiles with which she had accompanied this conversation, it appeared to me that Marguerite began to share my feelings, and that I approached the hour so long and anxiously desired.

"And the Duke, then?"

"What Duke?"

"My jealous old friend."

"He will know nothing of it."

"But if he should know it?"

"He will forgive you."

"Alas! no. He will abandon me; and what will then become of me?"

"You risk that abandonment, already, for another."

"How do you know that?"

"By the orders which you gave to-night, that no one else should be admitted."

"It is true; but he is a real friend."

"Whom you do not care much about, since you close your door against him."

"It is not for you to reproach me with so doing, since it was to receive yourself and your friend."

I had gradually approached Marguerite, and clasped my hands around her waist, and I could perceive that her slight form rested gently upon my joined hands.

"If you but knew how I love you!" whispered I to her.

"In very truth?"

"I swear it to you!"

"Well, then, if you promise to obey all my wishes, without uttering a word, without remonstrance and without question, I will love,—perhaps."

"Everything that you please!"

"But I give you fair warning, that I must be free to do exactly what seems good to me, without giving you the slightest explanation on the subject. I have long sought a lover, young without wilfulness, fond without distrust, and who could be loved without claiming any right to be so. I have never been able to find such an one. Men, instead of being satisfied that we accord to them for a long

time, that which they hardly hoped to obtain even once, demand from their mistress an account of the past, the present, and even the future! In proportion as they become habituated to her they seek to govern her,—and they become only more exacting for every concession that is made to them. If I now decide to accept a new lover, I shall wish him to possess three very rare qualities;—that is to be confiding, submissive, and discreet."

"Very well; I will be all that you can wish."

"We shall see."

"And when shall we see?"

"By-and-by."

"Why not now?"

"Because it is not always possible to execute treaties on the day of their signature."

"And when may I see you again?" said I, clasping her in my arms.

"To-morrow, between eleven o'clock and midnight. Are you content?"

"Can you ask me?"

"Not a word of all this to your friend, nor to Prudence, nor to any one whatever."

"Depend upon me."

"Now then, embrace me, and let us return to the supper-room."

She offered me her lips, arranged her hair, and we issued from the chamber, she singing and I half mad with joy.

In the drawing-room she whispered to me,—pausing for a moment—

"It must seem very strange to you, that I should appear ready to accept you so suddenly; do you know the cause of it?"

"It is because," said she,—taking my hand and placing it upon her heart, which palpitated violently;—"it is because, having less time to live than others, I have promised myself that I will live faster."

"Do not speak thus to me, I entreat you."

"Oh! do not distress yourself," said she laughing.

"However short a time I may have to live, I shall live longer than you will love me."

And she entered the supper-room, singing gaily.

"Where is Nanine?" said she, on seeing Gaston and Prudence alone.

"She is asleep in your chamber, waiting till you are ready to go to bed," answered Prudence.

"Poor girl! I kill her with my late hours. Come, gentlemen, it is time for you to retire."

Ten minutes afterwards, Gaston and I took our leave. Marguerite pressed my hand, as she bade me adieu, and remained with Prudence.

"Well!" asked Gaston, as we went out, "what do you say to Marguerite?"

"She is an angel; and I am really in love with her!"

"I suspected as much. Have you told her so?"

"Yes."

"And has she promised to believe you?"

"No."

"That is not the case with Prudence."

"She has promised you?"

"She has done better, my dear fellow! You would hardly believe it, but she is still a fine woman, that fat Duvernoy."

CHAPTER XI.

At this stage of his narrative Armand paused.

"Will you shut the window?" said he to me; "I begin to feel cold. Meantime, I will get into bed."

I shut the window. Armand, who was still very feeble, took off his dressing gown and got into bed; laying his head for a few minutes upon the pillow, like a man fatigued by a long walk, or agitated by painful recollections.

"You have perhaps talked too much," said I; "do

you wish that I should go and leave you to sleep? You shall relate to me another day the end of this history."

"Does it weary you?"

"On the contrary."

"I shall continue then; if you left me alone I should not sleep."

When I returned home, (resumed he,) I did not go to bed; I began to reflect upon the adventure of the day. The meeting, the presentation, Marguerite's engagement with me, all had been so rapid, so unhoped for, that there were moments when I thought I had been dreaming. It was not, however, the first time that a girl like Marguerite had promised herself to a man for the morrow of the day when he had sought her.

It was necessary for me to make this reflection, for the first impression produced upon me by my future mistress was so strong that it still subsisted. I was resolute not to see in her a girl like others, and with the vanity so common to all men, I was ready to believe that she felt irresistibly for me the same affection that I had for her.

Nevertheless, I had under my eyes examples very contradictory; and I had often heard it said that Marguerite's love was a sort of commodity more or less costly according to the season.

But how, also, on the other hand, to reconcile this reputation with the continual refusals made to the young Count whom we had found at her house? You will say to me that he did not please her, and that, as she was splendidly maintained by the Duke, if she went so far as to take another lover, she preferred one who pleased her. Why, then, would she have nothing to say to Gaston, who was charming, rich, and witty, and seemed to prefer me, whom she had found so ridiculous the first time she saw me?

It is true that there are sometimes incidents of a minute, which affect us more than the events of a whole year.

Of those who were at supper, I was the only one who was disquieted by seeing her quit the table. I had followed her; I was moved, and not able to hide it; I had shed

tears when kissing her hand. This circumstance, united to my daily visits during the two months of her illness, might have caused her to see in me another man to those she had known until then; and perhaps she had said to herself that she might very well grant for an affection expressed in this manner, what she had already granted so many times, that it no longer had any importance for her.

All these suppositions, as you see, were probable enough; but whatever might have been the reason of her consent, there was one thing certain, that is, that she had consented.

Now I was in love with Marguerite; I was about to possess her, and I could ask nothing more from her. However, I repeat to you, that although she was only what she was, I had made of this affection, to such a degree, a hopeless love,—perhaps to make it poetic,—that the nearer the moment approached when I should no longer even have the necessity of hoping, the more I doubted.

I did not close my eyes during the night.

I did not know myself. I was half mad. Now, I did not think myself handsome enough, nor rich enough, nor elegant enough to possess such a woman; now, I felt myself filled with vanity at the idea of this possession; then I began to fear that Marguerite had only a caprice for me, which would last but a few days; and, having a presentiment of evil in a prompt rupture, I should perhaps do best, I said to myself, not to go to her in the evening, but to withdraw altogether on writing to her my fears. From that I passed to unlimited hope,—to an unbounded confidence. I had incredible dreams of the future; I said to myself that this girl should owe to me her physical and moral recovery; that I would pass all my life with her; and that her love would render me happier than the affection of the chastest maiden.

In fact, I could not repeat to you the thousand thoughts which mounted from my heart to my head, and which passed away little by little in the sleep which gained upon me towards day.

When I awoke it was two o'clock. The weather was magnificent. I cannot remember that life had ever ap-

peared to me so beautiful and so rich. The recollections of the previous day were represented to my spirit without a shadow, without obstacles, and gaily surrounded by my hopes of the evening. I hastily dressed myself. I was happy, and capable of better actions. From time to time my heart bounded in my breast with joy and love. I felt a feverish, yet pleasant excitement. I no longer troubled myself with the reasons which had pre-occupied me before I slept; I saw but the result. I thought but of the hour when I was again to see Marguerite.

It was impossible for me to stay at home. My room appeared to be too small to contain my happiness; I required the open air of nature to give me room to breathe.

I went out.

I passed along the Rue d'Antin. Marguerite's brougham awaited her at her door. I proceeded towards the Champs Elysées. I loved, without even knowing them, everybody that I met.

How amiable and gentle loves makes one!

At the close of the hour during which I had walked from the *chevaux de Marly* to the fountain at the cross-roads, and from the fountain back again to the *chevaux de Marly*, I saw at a distance Marguerite's carriage;—I did not *know* it; I *divined* it.

At the moment of turning the angle of the Champs Elysées, she stopped, and a tall young man left the group with whom he was conversing to speak with her.

They conversed for a few minutes; the young man rejoined his friends; the horses went on; and I, who had approached the group, recognised in him who had spoken to Marguerite the Count de G——, whose portrait I had seen, and whom Prudence had pointed out to me as the person to whom Marguerite owed her position.

It was against him that she had closed her door the day previous. I supposed that she had stopped her carriage to give him the reason of this refusal; and I hoped that at the same time she had found some new pretext for not receiving him the following night.

How the rest of the day was passed I am ignoran-

I walked, I smoked, I conversed; but what I said, whom I met, at ten o'clock at night I had no recollection whatever.

All that I remember is, that I returned home, that I passed three hours over my toilette, and that I looked a hundred times at my clock and my watch, which unluckily told precisely the same story.

When the clock struck half-past ten, I said to myself that it was time to go.

I lived then in the Rue de Provence. I followed the Rue du Mont Blanc. I crossed the Boulevard, took the Rue Louis-le-Grand, the Rue de Port Mahon, and the Rue d'Antin. I looked up at the windows of Marguerite's apartment. There was a light there.

I rang.

I asked the porter if Mademoiselle Gautier was at home.

He answered me that she never returned before eleven o'clock, or a quarter past eleven.

I looked at my watch.

I believed I had walked very gently; but I had not taken more than five minutes to come from the Rue de Provence to Marguerite's house!

Then I paced up and down the street, which was without shops, and deserted at that hour.

At the end of half an hour Marguerite arrived. She stepped from her brougham, looking around her as if she were seeking for some one.

The carriage went away slowly, the stables and coach-house not being attached to the house. At the moment when Marguerite was about to ring, I approached and said to her:

"Good night."

"Ah! is it you?" she replied, in a tone but little reassuring as to the pleasure she felt in finding me there.

"Did you not permit me to visit you to-day?"

"That is true; I had forgotten it."

That word overthrew all my reflections of the morning, all my hopes of the day. However, I had begun to habituate myself to her peculiarities, and did not go away, as I certainly should have done formerly.

We entered.

Nanine had opened the door beforehand.

"Has Prudence returned?" asked Marguerite.

"No, Madame."

"Go, and say that the moment she returns she is to come to me. But first, put out the lamp in the drawing-room, and if any one calls say that I have not returned, and that I shall not return."

She was evidently pre-occupied by something, and perhaps annoyed by an importunate visitor. I did not know what countenance to assume, nor what to say. Marguerite proceeded towards her bed-chamber; I remained where I was.

"Come," said she to me.

She took off her bonnet and velvet mantle and threw them upon the table; then she let herself fall into a large easy-chair, near the fire, which she caused to be kept up to the very commencement of summer; and said to me, as she played with the chain of her watch,

"Well! what news have you to tell me?"

"Nothing, unless that I was wrong in coming this evening."

"Why?"

"Because you appear to be vexed, and no doubt I annoy you."

"You do not annoy me, but I am ill. I have suffered the whole day. I have not slept, and I have a frightful headache."

"Do you wish me to retire, to allow you to get into bed?"

"Oh! you can remain. If I wish to retire, I can very well get into bed before you."

At this moment some one rang the bell.

"Who comes there now?" she said, with a movement of impatience.

A few minutes after the bell rang again.

"So, there is no one to open the door;—it will be necessary for me to open it myself."

And in fact she rose, saying to me,—

"Wait here."

She crossed the apartment, and I heard the front door open. I listened.

He to whom she had opened the door stopped in the dining-room. At the first words that he uttered I recognized the voice of the young Count de N——.

"How are you this evening?" said he.

"Ill," drily replied Marguerite.

"Do I annoy you?"

"Perhaps."

"How you receive me! What have I done to you, my dear Marguerite?"

"My dear friend, you have done nothing to me. I am ill; it is necessary that I should go to bed; you will therefore do me the kindness of going away. It wearies me to death not to be able to return home of an evening without seeing you appear five minutes afterwards. What is it that you want? That I should be your mistress? Very well! I have already told you a hundred times that you annoy me most horribly, and that you can address yourself in other quarters. I repeat it to you, to-day, for the last time,—I will have nothing to do with you; that is well understood. Now, adieu! Ah, here is Nanine coming in; she will light you out. Good night."

And without adding a word, without listening to what the young man was stammering, Marguerite returned to her room and violently closed the door; by which Nanine, in her turn, entered almost immediately.

"You hear me!" said Marguerite to her; "you will always tell that stupid fellow that I am not here, or that I will not receive him. I am tired at last of perpetually seeing people who come to ask the same thing of me; who pay me, and then believe themselves quits with me. If those who enter upon our shameful vocation knew what it was, they would sooner become chambermaids. But no; the vanity of having dresses, carriages, and diamonds, drags us along. We believe in what we hear; for our sort of life has its creed; and one consumes, little by little, one's heart, one's body, one's beauty. We are feared

like savage beasts, despised as pariahs. We are surrounded only by people who always take from us more than they give, and some fine day we perish like a dog, after having ruined others, and ruined ourselves as well."

"Come, Madame, pray calm yourself," said Nanine; "you are nervous this evening."

"This dress annoys me," said Marguerite, tearing open the fastenings; "give me a dressing-gown.—Well! and Prudence?"

"She had not returned, but she will be sent to Madame the moment she comes in."

"And *there* is another," continued Marguerite, taking off her dress and putting on a white dressing-gown, "there is another who very well knows how to find me when she wants my assistance, and who cannot render me a service with a good grace. She knows that I await that answer this evening; that I must have it; that I am uneasy; and I am certain that she has gone off without troubling herself about me."

"Perhaps she may have been detained."

"Give us some punch."

"You will make yourself ill," said Nanine.

"All the better. Bring me some fruit also—some paté, or the wing of a chicken—something directly! I am hungry."

To tell the impression which this scene produced upon me is useless. You divine it, do you not?

"You are going to sup with me," she said. "While waiting, take a book. I am going into my dressing-room for an instant."

She lighted the candles, opened a door at the foot of her bed, and disappeared.

As to myself, I began to reflect upon the life of this girl, and my love was augmented by pity.

I walked rapidly up and down the chamber, dreaming all the while, when Prudence entered.

"What, you here!" she said, "and where is Marguerite?"

"In her dressing-room."

"I will wait for her. Well! she finds you charming; do you know that?"

"No."

"She has not told you anything about it?"

"Not at all."

"Why are you here?"

"I come to pay her a visit."

"At midnight?"

"Why not?"

"You are jesting!"

"She has even received me very badly."

"She will soon receive you better."

"You think so?"

"I bring her good news."

"That can do no harm.—So, she spoke to you concerning me?"

"Yesterday evening, or rather *this* morning, when you went away with your friend. *Apropos*, how your friend? Gaston R——, I think, they call him?"

"Yes," said I, without being able to prevent myself from smiling, on recalling the confidence which Gaston had conferred on me, and on seeing that Prudence scarcely knew his name.

"He is a charming young fellow; how does he employ himself?"

"He has an income of twenty-five thousand francs."

"Ah! truly! Well, to return to yourself. Marguerite has questioned me about you; she asked me who you were, what you did, who had been your mistresses;—in fact, all that one *can* ask about a man of your age. I told her all that I knew; adding that you were a charming fellow: so much for you."

"I thank you; and now, tell me with what commission she charged you yesterday?"

"With none at all; what she told me was to get rid of the Count; but she charged me with one for to-day, and it is the answer to that which I bring her this evening."

At this moment, Marguerite came out of her dressing-room, wearing a coquettish little night cap, ornamented

with bows of yellow ribbon. She was fascinating thus. She had her naked feet in a pair of satin slippers, and was trimming her nails.

"Well," said she, on seeing Prudence, 'have you seen the Duke?"

"I believe you."

"And what did he say to you?"

"He has given me ——."

"How much?"

"Six thousand."

"Have you them?"

"Yes."

"Did he appear to be annoyed?"

"No."

"Poor man!" This "poor man!" was uttered in a manner impossible to render. Marguerite took the six notes of a thousand francs each.

"It was time," said she. "My dear Prudence, are you in want of money?"

"You know, my child, that it will be the 15th in two days, and if you could lend me three or four hundred francs, you would do me a service."

"Send to-morrow morning; it is too late to get change."

"Do not forget."

"Be easy. Do you sup with us?"

"No; Charles awaits me at home."

"You are then still mad for him?"

"Raving, my dear!—till to-morrow. Adieu! Armand."

Madame Duvernoy went out. Marguerite opened her escritoire and threw in the bank notes.

"Do you permit me to get into bed?" she said smiling, and proceeding towards her bed.

"I not only permit it, but I pray you to do so."

She turned back the quilt and got into bed.

"Now," she said, "come and sit yourself near me, and let us converse."

Prudence was right; the answer which she had brought to Marguerite had made her gay.

"You will pardon me my bad humour of this evening?" she said to me, taking my hand.

"I am ready to pardon you much more."

"And you love me?"

"To madness."

"Notwithstanding my bad character?"

"Notwithstanding everything."

"You swear it to me?"

"Yes," said I, in a low voice.

Nanine then entered, bringing plates, a cold chicken, a bottle of Bordeaux, some strawberries, and two covers.

"I have not had any punch made," said Nanine; "Bordeaux is better for you. Is it not, sir?"

"Certainly," answered I, still greatly moved by Marguerite's last words, and my eyes ardently fixed upon her.

"Very well," she said, "place all that upon the little table and draw it to the bed-side. We will help ourselves. These are three nights that you have been kept up; you must wish to sleep. I want nothing more."

"Must I bolt the outer door?"

"I should think so! and above all say, that no one is to enter to-morrow, before mid-day."

CHAPTER XII.

At five o'clock in the morning, when daylight began to appear through the curtains, Marguerite said to me,

"Forgive me for driving you away, but it is necessary. The Duke comes every morning; he will be told that I am asleep, and he will, perhaps, wait until I awake."

I took her head between my hands, her dishevelled hair streaming about her like a veil,—and gave her a last kiss, while I asked,

"When shall I see you again?"

"Listen," said she. "Take the little gilded key which

is on the mantel-piece, open the door, restore the key to its place, and be off with you. During the day you will receive a letter containing my commands;—for you know that you are to obey me blindly."

"Yes: and if I, for my part, should already ask something?"

"What is it?"

"That you should allow me to keep this key."

"I have never done so for any one."

"Never mind, do it for me; for I swear to you that no one has ever loved you as I do."

"Very well, take it then; but I tell you, frankly, that it depends entirely upon me whether it is of any use to you."

"How so?"

"There are bolts inside the door."

"Cruel!"

"I will have them removed."

"You love me, then, a little?"

"I don't quite understand it, but I fancy that—I do. And now, away with you. I am dying of sleep."

We remained for a moment in each other's arms, and I took my departure.

The streets were deserted; the great city still slept. A sweet freshness pervaded the air of those regions which, a few hours later, would resound with the "busy hum of men."

It seemed as if this sleeping town belonged to me. I sought in my memory the names of those whose happiness I had heretofore envied; but I could not recall one without finding myself happier than he.

To be loved by a chaste maiden,—to be the first to reveal to her this strange mystery,—is certainly a great happiness; but it is the simplest thing in the world. To obtain possession of a heart unaccustomed to sustain attacks, is to enter a town ungarrisoned and undefended. Education, sense of duty, and family affection are watchful sentinels; but there are no sentinels too watchful to be deceived by a young girl of sixteen, to whom, by

the voice of the man whom she loves, nature gives those first impulses of passion, which are only the more ardent in proportion as they seem the more pure.

The more the young girl believes in purity, the more readily she abandons herself, if not to her lover, at least to her love; because being without distrust she is without strength; and to make himself beloved by such a one is a triumph which every man of five-and-twenty may secure himself whenever he pleases. And this is true, though young girls are surrounded by every extreme of vigilance, and every possible rampart. Convents have no walls high enough—mothers no locks strong enough—religion no sense of duty sufficiently sustained—to confine all these charming birds in their cages; into which, by the way, their keepers do not take the trouble even to throw a few flowers to reconcile the captives to their imprisonment. Therefore, they necessarily long for the world which is hidden from them, because they cannot but suppose that it is tempting; and thus they are ready to listen to the first voice which offers to tell them of its secrets through the bars of their prison; and to bless the hand which first lifts a corner of the mysterious veil which shuts it out from their view.

But to be *really loved* by a courtezan is a victory far more difficult. With that class the body has worn out the soul; the senses have burned out the heart; dissipation has indurated the feelings. The words that one utters have been long familiar to them; the means that one employs they are acquainted with; the very love which they inspire they have made matter of traffic. They love from vocation, and not from impulse. They are more securely guarded by their cool and mercenary calculations than the virgin by her mother and her convent; and they have actually invented the word "caprice" for that non-mercenary love which they occasionally seek for repose, for excuse, or for consolation;—like those usurers, who, after fleecing a thousand persons, think to atone for everything by one day lending twenty francs to some poor wretch who is dying of hunger, without exacting interest from him, or demanding a receipt.

Moreover, when Heaven permits a courtezan to love, this love, which seems at first an indulgence, a pardon, becomes almost always a chastisement. There is no absolution without penance. When a poor creature whose whole past is a reproach to her, finds herself bound by a deep, sincere, and irresistible love, of which she would never have believed herself capable ;—when she has avowed this love, how absolutely the man governs her! How strong he feels himself with the cruel right of saying to her, "You love no more than you have already done for money!"

Then she knows not what proof to give of her devotion. The fable tells us of a child, who, after having for a long time amused himself in a field by giving a false alarm, and crying out for help, was one day devoured by a wolf, while those whom he had so often deceived paid no attention to the cries of real agony which he this time uttered. It is thus with these unhappy girls when they really love ; they have been guilty of falsehood so many times that no one will any longer believe them, and they are, in the midst of their remorse, consumed by their despised love. Hence the extraordinary self-devotion, or the austere repentance, of which some of them have given the example.

But when the man who inspires this redeeming sentiment has a soul sufficiently generous to accept it without remembering the past,—when he really abandons himself to the emotion,—when, in fine, he loves as he is beloved,—that man exhausts at one draught all earthly emotions, and after that passion his heart is for ever closed to all other love.

I do not mean to say that I made these reflections on the morning in question ; they would have been but the presentiment of what was about to happen ; and, despite my love for Marguerite, I foresaw no such consequences. I make these reflections now : all being irrevocably finished, they result naturally from what has taken place.

But to return to the first day of this *liaison*. When I returned home, I was wild with delight. On remembering that the barriers placed by my imagination between Mar-

guerite and myself had disappeared—that I possessed her —that I somewhat occupied her thoughts—that I had in my pocket the key of her apartment, and the right of making use of that key—I was content with life, proud of myself, and pleased with the fate which permitted all this.

One day a young man passes through a street; he jostles a young woman; he looks at her; he turns round, and passes on. He does not know this woman; she has pleasures, griefs, loves, in which he has no part. He does not exist for her, and perhaps, if he spoke to her, she would laugh at him, as Marguerite had done at me. Weeks, months, years flow on; and suddenly, when each has followed his or her own destiny in a different direction, the logic of chance brings them again face to face. This young woman becomes the mistress of this man, and loves him. How? why? their two existences make but one; the intimacy has scarcely begun to exist, when it appears to them to have always existed, and all that preceded is effaced from the memory of the two lovers. We must acknowledge that this is curious.

As to myself, I no longer remembered how I had lived before the preceding day. All my being was exalted with joy at the recollection of the words exchanged during that first night. Either Marguerite was clever in deceiving, or she felt for me one of those sudden passions which are revealed with the first kiss, and which sometimes, by the way, die as suddenly as they are born.

The more I reflected over it the more I said to myself that Marguerite had no reason to feign an affection which she did not feel, and I also said to myself that women have two ways of loving, which ways result the one from the other: they love with the heart or with the senses. A woman often takes a lover in obedience to the dictation of her senses, and learns, without having expected it, the mystery of spiritual love, and no longer lives except through her heart. Often a young girl expecting in marriage but the union of two pure affections, receives this sudden revelation of physical love, this energetic conclusion of the most chaste impressions of the soul.

I fell into a sleep in the midst of these thoughts. I was awoke by a letter being brought to me from Marguerite; a letter containing these words:

"Here are my orders. This evening at the Vaudeville. Come after the third act.—M. G."

I locked this billet in a drawer, so as always to have the reality under my hand, in case I should doubt, as happened to me at times.

She did not tell me to go and see her in the daytime; I did not dare present myself at her house; but I had so great a desire to meet her before the evening that I went to the Champs Elysées, where, as on the day before, I saw her pass and descend from the carriage.

At seven o'clock I was at the Vaudeville. Never before had I entered a theatre so early. All the boxes filled one after the other. One only remained empty, in the lower tier near the stage.

At the commencement of the third act I heard the door of this box open, upon which I had almost constantly kept my eyes fixed. Marguerite appeared.

She passed directly to the front, glanced at the stalls, saw me, and thanked me with a look.

She was marvellously beautiful that evening.

Was I the cause of this coquetry? Did she love me enough to believe that the more beautiful I should find her the happier I should be? I am still unaware; but if such had been her intention, she succeeded; for when she showed herself, the spectators were seen to whisper as they glanced at her, and even the actors on the stage gazed on her, who thus disturbed the spectators by her mere appearance.

And I had the key of the apartment of this woman, and in three or four hours she would again be mine.

It is the custom to blame those who ruin themselves for actresses and females under protection. That which astonishes me is, that they do not commit twenty times more follies for them. You must, like me, have lived that life to know how much the daily flatteries which they heap upon their lover firmly fixes in the heart the love (since we have no other word for it) which he feels for them.

Prudence next took her place in the box, and a man whom I recognised for the Count de G—— seated himself at the back.

On seeing him, a coldness passed over my heart.

Doubtless Marguerite perceived the impression produced upon me by the presence of this man in her box, for she smiled on me anew, and turning her back on the Count, appeared very attentive to the piece. At the close of the third act she turned round, and spoke two words; the Count quitted the box, and Marguerite signed to me to come and see her.

"Good evening," she said, when I entered, and she gave me her hand.

"Good evening," I answered, addressing myself to Marguerite and Prudence.

"Take a seat."

"But I am taking some one's place. Does not the Count de G—— return?"

"Yes; I have sent him to get me some *bonbons* so that we might converse alone for an instant. Madame Duvernoy is in my confidence."

"Yes, my children," said the latter; "but make yourself easy, I shall not say anything."

"What is the matter with you though, this evening?" said Marguerite, rising and coming into the shade of the box to kiss me on the forehead.

"I am not very well."

"You must go to bed," she answered, ironically.

"Where?"

"At your house."

"You know very well that I could not sleep there."

"Then you must not come making wry faces at us because you have seen a man in my box."

"It is not for that reason."

"But it is, though! I am sure of it, and you are wrong; therefore we will not say anything more about it. You will come after the piece is over to Prudence's apartment, and you will remain there until I call you. Do you hear?"

"Yes."

Could I disobey?

"You love me still?" she resumed.

"You ask me such a thing!"

"You have thought of me?"

"All the day."

"Do you know that I am decidedly afraid of falling in love with you? Ask Prudence."

"Ah!" answered the latter, "it is astounding!"

"Now then, you will go back to your stall. The Count is about to return, and it is not necessary for him to find you here."

"Why?"

"Because it is disagreeable for you to see him."

"No; only if you had told me that you wished to come to the Vaudeville this evening, I could have sent you this box quite as well as he."

"Unhappily, he brought it me without my asking it of him, when offering to accompany me. You know very well I could not refuse it. All that I could do was to write to you where I was going, so that you should see me, and because I had myself some pleasure in seeing you earlier; but as it is thus that you thank me, I will profit by the lesson."

"I am wrong; pardon me."

"That's better. Now return quietly to your place, and above all, don't play the jealous any more."

She kissed me again and I quitted the box.

In the lobby I encountered the Count, who was on his way back.

I returned to my stall.

After all, the presence of M. de G—— in Marguerite's box was a most simple thing. He had been her lover; he brought her a box; he accompanied her to the theatre: all that was very natural; and from the moment when I had a girl like Marguerite for a mistress, I must necessarily accept her habits.

I was, however, not the less very unhappy for the remainder of the evening; and I was very sad on going away

after having seen the Count, Prudence, and Marguerite get in tothe calèche which awaited them at the door.

And nevertheless, a quarter of an hour afterwards, I was in the apartment of Prudence. She had just returned.

CHAPTER XIII.

"You have come almost as rapidly as we," said Prudence to me.

"Yes," replied I, mechanically. "Where is Marguerite?"

"At home."

"Alone?"

"No; with Monsieur de G——."

I paced rapidly up and down the apartment.

"What is the matter?"

"The matter! Do you think I find it amusing to wait here until Monsieur de G—— leaves Marguerite?"

"You are no longer reasonable," retorted Prudence. "Pray understand that Marguerite cannot turn the Count out of doors; he has long been her friend, has given her a great deal of money, and still does so. Marguerite spends more than 100,000 francs (£4,000) a-year, and owes many debts. The Duke sends her what she asks, but she dare not be always asking him for all that she wants. She cannot quarrel with the Count, who supplies her with several thousand francs a month. Marguerite is very fond of you, my friend, but your *liaison* with her, for her interest as well as for yours, ought not to be serious. It is not with your seven or eight thousand francs of income that you can support the extravagance of that girl; these would not keep her carriage! Take Marguerite for what she is; for a good, intelligent, and pretty girl. Be her lover for a month, or two months; give her bouquets, *bon-bons*, and boxes at the theatre; but put nothing further into your head, and do not make any ridiculous 'scenes' of jealousy

with her. You well know with whom you have to do. Marguerite is not a vestal. You please her; you are very fond of her; do not disturb yourself about anything beyond. I like the idea of you playing the susceptible! You have the most fascinating mistress in Paris; she receives you in a magnificent apartment; she is covered with diamonds; she does not cost you a sous, and you are not satisfied! What the deuce! you ask too much!"

"You are right, no doubt; but it is too much for me; the idea that this man is her lover, makes me suffer inexpressibly."

"But, to begin with," retorted Prudence, "*is* he still her lover? He is a man of whom she has need,—that is all. For these two days she has closed her doors against him; but she could not do otherwise than accept his box, and allow him to accompany her. He returns with her; he goes up to her apartments for a moment; he is not allowed to remain because you are here. All this is very natural, it seems to me. Besides, you make no objection to the Duke."

"That is true; but he is an old man, and I am sure that Marguerite is not his mistress. Besides, one might very possibly tolerate one *liaison*, and not have a fancy to overlook two. Such facility, too, much resembles a matter of calculation, and places the man who practises it, even from love, in a position too similar to that of those who, in a grade one degree lower, make a business of this practice, and a profit of such business."

"Ah! my dear fellow, you are antique! How many have I seen, and those of the noblest, the richest, and the most elegant, do that which I advise you, and that without hesitation, or remorse, or any feeling of shame. Why, it happens every day. How do you imagine that the Parisian ladies who are under 'protection,' could maintain the style which they display, if they had not three or four lovers at a time? There is no fortune, however large, which could by itself support the expenses of a girl like Marguerite. A fortune of 500,000 francs of income (£20,000) is an enormous fortune in France; but still it would not suffice for this, and I will tell you why

"A man who has such an income has an establishment and a household; friends to entertain, horses, servants, carriages, and hounds; he is very likely married; he has children; he plays, he travels; he does, I know not what! All these habits are so established that he cannot dispense with any one of them, without raising a suspicion of being embarrassed and creating a scandal. When the account comes to be made up, he cannot with his 500,000 francs per annum give more than 40,000 or 50,000 francs during the year, and even that is a great deal. Very well, then! Other amours furnish the balance of the expenditure of the lady! With Marguerite, however, it is better than this. She has, by a miracle, encountered an old man, immensely rich, whose wife and daughter are dead; who has now only nephews, themselves rich, and he gives her all that she asks, and demands nothing in exchange. But she cannot ask him for more than sixty or seventy thousand francs per year; and I am sure if she were to ask more, that, despite his fortune, and his affection for her, he would refuse it.

"All young men, having incomes of 20,000 or 30,000 francs, that is to say, barely enough to live upon in the society which they frequent, know very well when they are the lovers of a girl like Marguerite, that she cannot even pay the rent of her apartments with what they give her. They do not tell her that they know this; they appear to see nothing of the kind; and when they have had enough of the affair, they go about their business. If they have the vanity of trying to assume the whole responsibility, they ruin themselves like fools, and then go and get themselves killed in Africa, leaving 100,000 francs of debts in Paris. Do you suppose that the lady is obliged to them for so doing? Not the least in the world. On the contrary, she says, that she has sacrificed her position to them, and that while she was with them she lost money! No doubt, you find all these details very humiliating—but they are *true*. You are a charming young fellow, whom I like very much. I have lived twenty years among girls of this sort; I know what they are, and what they are worth, and I do not wish you to take seriously to heart the caprice which a pretty girl happens to have for you.

"Besides, beyond all this," continued Prudence, "let us admit that Marguerite loves you sufficiently to renounce the Count and the Duke, in case they should remark your *liaison*, and tell her to choose between you and themselves. The sacrifice would be enormous. What sacrifice can you make for her of equal importance? When the condition of satiety shall have arrived—when, in fact, you want no more of her—what will you do to compensate her for what you will have caused her to lose? Nothing! You will have isolated her from the world in which her future and her fortune lay; she will have given you her best and loveliest years, and she will be forgotten. Then you will either be a man of the ordinary stamp, and casting her former life in her teeth, you will say, that on leaving her, you do only like her other lovers, and you will leave her to certain misery; or you will be a kind-hearted and honourable man, and believing yourself forced to keep her near you, you will surrender yourself to an inevitable misfortune; for this connection, excusable in the young man, ceases to be so with the man of mature age. She becomes an obstacle to everything; she precludes you from forming family ties, and from pursuing the schemes of ambition, that second and last love of man. Believe me then, my friend, take things at their real value, and women for what they are; and do not give to a girl of Marguerite's class the right to consider herself your creditor, in any respect whatever."

This was wisely argued, and with a logic of which I should have thought Prudence quite incapable. I could find nothing to reply, except that she was right. I gave her my hand, and thanked her for her good advice.

"Come, come," said she, "drive away these gloomy theories and laugh. Life is delightful, my friend, although varied by the glass through which you look upon it. Ask your friend Gaston. There is a person who seems to me to understand love as I understand it. That of which you must be convinced, unless you are to become a very dull fellow, is, that there is near here a beautiful girl, who awaits most impatiently for the departure of the person who is now with her, who thinks of you, who retains her night for

you, and who certainly loves you. Now, come and stand by the window with me, and let us see the departure of the Count, who will not be long before making room for us."

Prudence opened her window, and we stood beside each other on the balcony.

She looked at the few passers by; I dreamed.

All that she had said to me was buzzing in my head, and I could not but admit that she was right; but the real love which I felt for Marguerite could not easily reconcile itself to such reasoning. I occasionally sighed, therefore, in a manner which caused Prudence to turn and gaze at me, shrugging her shoulders like a physician who despairs of a patient."

"How strongly," said I to myself, "one feels, from the rapidity of sensations, that life ought to be short. I have known Marguerite but two days, she is my mistress only since yesterday, and yet she has already taken such a place in my thoughts, my heart, and my life, that the visit of the Count de G—— seems to me a personal misfortune."

At length the Count came out, entered his carriage, and disappeared.

At the same moment Marguerite called us.

"Come at once. They are setting the table; we are going to sup."

When I entered her apartment, Marguerite ran to meet me, threw her arms around my neck, and embraced me warmly.

"Are we still sulky?" said she.

"No, it is over," said Prudence. "I have read him lecture, and he has promised to behave better."

"That is fortunate."

We sat down to table. Fascination, sweetness, veracity,—Margaret possessed them all; and I was forced, from time to time, to remember that I had no right to demand anything else, and that many persons would be delighted to be in my place; and that, like the shepherd of Virgil, I had only to enjoy the pleasures which a deity, or rather a goddess, offered to me.

I endeavoured, therefore, to put in practice the theories

of Prudence, and to be as gay as my two companions; but that which, with them, was natural, was on my part an effort: and the nervous laugh which I uttered, and by which they were deceived, was not far removed from tears.

The supper ended at length, and I remained alone with Marguerite. She seated herself (according to her habit) upon the hearth rug, and gazed sadly and abstractedly into the fire.

She was thinking—of what? I am ignorant. I gazed upon her with love, and almost with terror, while reflecting upon what I was near suffering for her.

"Come and sit beside me," said she, suddenly

I reclined at her side.

"Do you know what I was thinking?"

"No."

"Of a plan than I have formed."

"And what is that plan?"

"I cannot yet confide it to you, but I *can* tell you what will be its result. It will be that in a month from this time I shall be free; I shall no longer owe anything; and we will go together to spend the summer in the country."

"And you cannot tell me by what means?"

"No. It is only necessary that you should loveme as I love you, and all will go well."

"Have you formed this plan by yourself?"

"Yes."

"And you will carry it into execution alone?"

"I alone will have all the trouble," said Marguerite, with a smile; "but we will share the profits."

I blushed, involuntarily, at this word "profits;" for it reminded me of Manon Lescaut squandering the money of Monsieur de B—— in compauy with Desgrieux.

I answered with a little sternness, and rising at the same time,

"You will permit me, my dear Marguerite, not to share the profits of any enterprises but those that I myself conceive and execute."

"What does that mean?"

"It means that I strongly suspect the Count de G—— of being your partner in this fortunate plan, of which I accept neither the responsibility nor the profits."

"You are a child! I fancied that you loved me; I was deceived. Very well."

And she in turn rose, opened her piano, and began to play "The Invitation to the Waltz," up to that famous passage in the major mode, which always stopped her.

Was this from mere habit, or to remind me of the day when we first became acquainted? I know, only, that with this melody remembrance came back; and that approaching her, I took her head between my two hands and kissed her forehead.

"You forgive me?"

"You see that I do so," said she; "but pray observe that this is only our second day, and that I have already something to forgive. You pay little regard to your promises of blind obedience."

"What would you have, Marguerite? I love you too much, and I am jealous of your slightest thought. That which you proposed to me just now made me wild with joy; but the mystery which precedes the fulfilment of your project distresses me."

"Let us reason a little," said she, taking both my hands, and looking at me with that charming smile which it was impossible for me to resist; "you love me, do you not? and you would be happy to pass two or three months with me alone in the country? I, also, should be happy in this double solitude; indeed, I should not only enjoy it, but I need it for the sake of my health. I cannot leave Paris for so long a time without putting my affairs in order, and the affairs of a person like me are sadly entangled. But I have discovered the means of reconciling everything;—both my affairs and my love for you. Yes, for you!—you need not laugh; I am insane enough to love you! And yet you assume grand airs, and use big words to me. Child! triple child, that you are! remember only that I love you, and do not disquiet yourself about anything. Is it agreed? Come, now?"

"All that you wish is agreed, of course. You know it well."

"Very well, then; and within a month we will be in some village, walking on the brink of a rivulet, and drinking milk. It seems strange, no doubt, that I should speak thus,—I, Marguerite Gautier; but it is because this Parisian life, which seems to make me so happy, when it does not burn me, fatigues me, and then I have sudden aspirations towards a calmer existence, which may recall my childhood. Every one has known this time of childhood, whatever the subsequent life may have been. But do not be alarmed; I am not about to tell you that I am the daughter of a retired colonel, and that I was educated at Saint Denis. I am a poor girl, a country girl; and six years ago I could not write my own name. You are reassured now, are you not? Why do I first address myself to *you*, to share the joy of the desire that has dawned upon me? Doubtless, because I have recognised that you love me for myself, and not selfishly; while others have never loved me, except for their own pleasure.

"I have often been to the country, but never as I should like to go. I count upon you for a happiness so easily attained; do not be ill-natured, but grant it to me. Say this to yourself: 'She will not live to be old, and I shall, one day, not regret having granted the first request that she ever made, and one, too, that was so easily granted.'"

What could I reply to language such as this; especially with the souvenir of a first night of love, and in the expectation of a second?

An hour later Marguerite was in my arms, and had she asked me to commit a crime, I should have obeyed. At six o'clock in the morning I left her; and before going I said,

"Till this evening?"

She embraced me tenderly, but made no answer.

During the day I received a letter, which contained these words:—

"Dear Friend,—I am not well, and the doctor orders

me repose. I shall retire early to-night, and shall not see you; but to recompense you, I shall await you to-morrow, at mid-day. I love you."

My first word was, "She is deceiving me."

A cold sweat broke from my forehead; for I already loved this woman too deeply not to be distressed by such a suspicion.

And, nevertheless, I was bound to calculate upon such an occurrence almost daily with Marguerite, and the same thing had already often happened to me with others, without my giving it much thought. Whence, then, the empire she had acquired over me?

It then occurred to me, as I had the key of her chamber, to go to her as usual. In that way I should speedily know the truth, and if I should find a man there I would insult him.

Meantime, I went to the Champs Elysées. I remained there four hours. She did not make her appearance. In the evening I visited all the theatres which she was accustomed to attend; but she was nowhere to be seen. At eleven o'clock I went to the Rue d'Antin. There was no light in Marguerite's windows, but I rang nevertheless. The porter asked me where I was going.

"To Mademoiselle Gautier's apartments."

"She has not yet come in."

"I will go up, and wait for her."

"There is no one there."

There was evidently a prohibition, which I could certainly break through, as I had the key; but I feared to make a ridiculous scandal, and I went away.

But I did not return home. I could not leave the street, and I did not lose sight of the house. I fancied that I had still something to learn; or, at least, that my suspicions were about to be confirmed. Near midnight a brougham, which I knew but too well, stopped at No. 9. The Count de G—— descended from it and entered the house, after having dismissed his carriage.

For a moment I hoped that, like myself, he would be told that Marguerite was not at home, and that I should

see him come out again; but at four o'clock in the morning I was still waiting.

I have suffered greatly for the last three weeks, but nothing in comparison with what I suffered during that night.

CHAPTER XIV.

When I reached home, I began to weep like a child. There is no man who has not been deceived at least once, and who does not know what one suffers on these occasions.

I said to myself, under the weight of those feverish resolutions which one always believes we have the strength to keep, that I must immediately break off with this affection, and I impatiently awaited the return of day to go and engage my place, in order to return to my father and sister a double affection of which I was certain, and one which would not deceive me.

Nevertheless, I did not wish to depart without Marguerite well knowing why I left. Only a man who has really ceased to love his mistress, leaves her without writing.

I planned and replanned twenty letters in my head.

I had had to do with a girl like all of her class, I had idealised her a great deal too much, she had treated me as a schoolboy, employing, in order to deceive me, a *ruse* of an insulting simplicity—that was clear. My self-love then took the upper hand. It was necessary to quit this woman without giving her the satisfaction of knowing what this rupture caused me to suffer; and here is what I wrote to her in my most elegant hand, and with tears of rage and grief in my eyes :—

"My dear Marguerite,—I hope that your indisposition of yesterday will not have been much. I went at eleven o'clock in the evening to ask news of you, and they told me that you had not returned. M. de G—— was more fortunate than I, for he presented himself a few minutes after, and at four o'clock in the morning he was still at your house.

"Pardon me the few tedious hours that I have caused you to pass, and feel assured that I shall never forget the happy moments which I owe to you.

"I should have called to-day, to ask after you, but I am about to return to my father.

"Adieu, my dear Marguerite. I am neither rich enough to love you as I should wish, or poor enough to love you as you would desire. Let us then forget: you, a name which must be nearly indifferent to you, and I, a happiness which is no longer possible for me.

"I return you your key, of which I have never made use, and which may be useful to you, if you are often ill as you were yesterday."

As you may see, I had not the strength to finish this letter without an impertinent irony, which proved how much I was still in love.

I read and re-read this letter ten times, and the thought that it would cause some pain to Marguerite, calmed me a little. I endeavoured to harden myself to the sentiments which it affected, and when at eight o'clock, my servant came into my room, I gave it him to deliver directly.

"Was he to wait an answer?" asked Joseph (my servant was called Joseph like all other servants).

"If they ask you if there is an answer, you will say that you know nothing about it, and you will wait."

I grasped at the hope that she would answer me.

Poor and feeble that we are!

The whole time that my servant remained out, I was extremely agitated. Now, recollecting how Marguerite had given herself up to me, I asked myself by what right I wrote her an impertinent letter, when she could answer me that it was not M. de G—— who deceived me, but I who deceived M. de G——, a reason which allows many women to have several lovers. Now, recalling the vows of this girl, I wished to convince myself that my letter was still too sweet, and that there were not any expressions strong enough to stigmatise a woman who laughed at an affection so sincere as mine. Then, I said to myself that I should have done better not to write to her, but should have gone to

her in the daytime, and by this means, I should have enjoyed the tears which I would have caused her to shed.

At last I asked myself, in what way will she answer me? I was already prepared to believe in the excuse that she would make to me.

Joseph returned.

"Well?" I said to him.

"Sir," he replied, "Madame was in bed and still slept, but the moment she rings they will deliver the letter, and if there is an answer they will bring it."

She slept! Twenty times I was on the point of sending back to obtain the letter, but I always said to myself,—

"They have perhaps already given it her, and I should have the air of repenting."

The nearer the hour approached at which it was likely that she would answer me, the more I regretted having written.

Ten, eleven, twelve o'clock struck. At twelve I thought of going to the rendezvous as if nothing had passed. At length, I did not know what to imagine in order to retreat from the circle of iron which surrounded me.

At one o'clock I still waited.

Then I thought, with that superstition of people who await anything, that if I went out for a little, on my return I should find an answer. Answers impatiently awaited always arrive when one is not at home.

I went out then under the pretext of going to breakfast.

Instead of breakfasting at the Cafè Foy, at the corner of the Boulevard, as I was accustomed to do, I preferred to go and breakfast in the Palais Royal, and to pass by the Rue d'Antin. Each time that I perceived a woman in the distance, I thought I saw Nanine bringing me an answer. I passed along the Rue d'Antin without having even met a porter (commissionaire). I reached the Palais Royal—I entered Véry's. The waiter made me eat, or rather served me with what he wished, for I did not eat.

Notwithstanding myself, my eyes were always fixed upon the clock.

I returned home, convinced that I was about to find a letter from Marguerite.

The porter had received nothing. I still had hope in my servant. The latter had seen no one since I went out.

If Marguerite had intended to answer me, she would have done so some time ago.

Then, I began to regret the terms of my letter. I should have remained completely silent, which would doubtless have had the effect of causing her some disquiet. Finding that I did not come to the rendezvous given the day before, she would have asked me the reasons of my absence, and then only should I have given them to her. In this manner she could not have done otherwise than exculpate herself; and what I wanted was that she should exculpate herself. I already felt, that whatever reasons she might have given me, I should have believed them, and that I had better have believed all than to see her no more.

I persuaded myself that she would come to my house, but hours passed and she came not.

Decidedly Marguerite was not like all women; for there are very few of them who, on receiving such a letter as that which I had just written, would not have made some reply.

At five o'clock, I went to the Champs Elysées.

"If I meet her," I thought, "I will affect an indifferent air, and she will be convinced that I already no longer think of her."

At the turning of the Rue Royale, I saw her pass in her carriage; the meeting was so sudden that I turned pale. I am unaware whether she saw my emotion; as for myself, I was so troubled that I saw but her carriage.

I did not continue my promenade to the Champs Elysées. I examined the playbills, for I had still a chance of seeing her.

There was a first performance at the Palais Royal. Marguerite would certainly be present.

I was at the theatre at seven o'clock.

All the boxes filled; but Marguerite did not appear.

Then, I quitted the Palais-Royal, and went into all the theatres which she oftenest visited—the Vaudeville, the Variétés, the Opéra Comique.

She was nowhere to be seen!

Either my letter had caused her too much pain for her to trouble herself about the theatre, or she feared to find herself with me, and wished to avoid an explanation.

That is what my vanity whispered me, when I met Gaston, who asked me from where I came.

"From the Palais Royal."

"And I from the Opera," he said; "I even thought of seeing you there."

"Why?"

"Because Marguerite was there."

"Oh! was she there?"

"Yes."

"Alone?"

"No: with one of her female friends."

"Was that all?"

"The Count de G—— came for an instant into her box; but she went away with the Duke. At each moment I expected you to appear. There was a stall at my side which remained empty the whole evening, and I was convinced that you had taken it."

"But why should I go where Marguerite goes?"

"Because you are her lover, to be sure!"

"And who told you that?"

"Prudence, whom I met yesterday. I congratulate you upon it, my dear fellow: she is a pretty mistress, who is not at everybody's disposal. Keep her; she will do you honour."

This simple reflection of Gaston showed me how ridiculous were my susceptibilities.

If I had met him the day before, and he had spoken to me thus, I certainly should not have written the silly letter of the morning.

I was just about to call upon Prudence, and to send her to say to Marguerite that I wished to speak to her; but I feared that, to avenge herself, she would answer me

that she could not receive me; and I returned home, after having passed through the Rue d'Antin.

I again asked of my porter if he had a letter for me.

"Nothing."

"She has wished to see whether I should take any fresh steps, and if I should retract my letter to-day," I said to myself, on going to bed; "but seeing that I do not write to her, she will write to me to-morrow."

That evening, above all, I repented of what I had done. I was alone in my room, not being able to sleep, devoured with inquietude and jealousy, when on letting things follow their true course, I should have been with Marguerite, and hearing the charming words I had heard but twice, and which burned in my ears in my solitude.

That which was frightful in my situation was, that on reasoning, I found myself in the wrong; in fact, everything said to me that Marguerite loved me. To begin with: this plan of passing the summer alone in the country; then the certainty that nothing forced her to be my mistress, since my fortune was insufficient to her wants, and even to her caprices. There had been then with her nothing but the hope of finding in me a sincere affection, in which she could seek repose from the mercenary love in the midst of which she lived; and from the second day I destroyed this hope, and I recompensed, by bitter irony, the love which for two nights I had accepted. That which I was doing was therefore more than ridiculous—it was indelicate. Had I even paid her, that I claimed the right to censure her mode of life? What! I had known Marguerite but thirty-six hours; I had been her lover but four-and-twenty; and yet I acted the susceptible, and instead of finding myself too happy that she shared her time with me, I wished to have her all to myself, or to force her to destroy with a single blow those existing relations which were the source of her income. Of what had I to reproach her? Nothing. She had written to me that she was indisposed, when she might have told me plainly, with the hideous frankness of certain women, that she had to receive a lover; and, instead of believing in her letter—instead of taking a walk in all

the streets of Paris, except the Rue d'Antin—instead of passing the evening with my friends, and of presenting myself the next day at the hour she had named to me—I acted the Othello—I spied her—and I thought to punish her by seeing her no more. But she must, on the contrary, be enchanted by this separation—she must find me extremely silly, and her silence was not even revengeful—it was disdainful.

I ought then to have made Marguerite a present, which would leave her no doubt as to my generosity, and which would have allowed me, treating her as the mistress of another, to think myself quits with her; but I should have feared to wound, by the least appearance of traffic, if not the love she had for me, at least the love I had for her, and since this love was so pure that it admitted of no partners in it, I could not pay with a present, however handsome it might be, the happiness I had experienced, however short this happiness may have been.

This is what I repeated to myself during the night, and that which I was ready at any moment to go and say to Marguerite.

When day dawned, I had not yet slept—I was feverish—it was impossible for me to think of anything else than Marguerite.

As you may understand, it was necessary to take a decisive part, and to finish with this woman or with my scruples, if, however, she should still consent to receive me.

But, you know, one always delays taking a decisive part; therefore, not being able to stay at home, and not daring to present myself at Marguerite's, I tried a method of approaching her, which my vanity could attribute to chance, in case it succeeded.

It was nine o'clock; I hastened to Prudence, who asked me to what cause she owed this early visit.

I dared not tell her frankly what had brought me there. I answered her that I had come out early to take a place in the diligence going to C——, where my father lived.

"You are very lucky," she said, "to be able to quit Paris this beautiful weather."

I looked at Prudence, asking myself if she was mocking me.

But her face was serious.

"Are you going to say adieu to Marguerite?" she resumed, still seriously.

"No."

"You do well."

"You think so?"

"Naturally. Since you have broken off with her, of what good is it to see her?"

"You know, then, of our rupture?"

"She showed me your letter."

"And what did she say to you?"

"She said to me, 'My dear Prudence, your protégé is not polite: one thinks such letters, but one does not write them.'"

"And in what tone did she say that to you?"

"Laughing; and she added, 'He has supped twice with me, and he does nor even favour me with a visit of digestion.'"

Here was the effect which my letter and my jealousy had produced. I was cruelly humiliated in the vanity of my love.

"And what did she do yesterday evening?"

"She went to the Opera."

"I know that. And what next?"

"She supped at home."

"Alone?"

"With the Count de G—— I believe."

Thus my rupture had changed nothing in Marguerite's habits.

It is in consequence of such circumstances as these, that some people say to you:—

"You must think no more of this woman, who did not love you."

"Well, I am very happy to see that Marguerite does not make herself miserable on my account," I added, with a forced smile.

"And she is very right. You have done what you

ought to have done; you have been more reasonable than she, for she loved you; she did nothing but talk of you, and she would have been capable of committing any absurdity on your account."

"Why did she not answer me then, since she loves me?"

"Because she understood that she was wrong to love you. Women allow now and then their love to be deceived, but never allow their self-love to be wounded; and one always wounds the self-love of a woman when, two days after one is her lover, we leave her, whatever the reasons may be which one gives as the cause of this rupture. I know Marguerite—she would die rather than answer you."

"What must I do then?"

"Nothing. She will forget you—you will forget her—and you will have nothing with which to reproach each other."

"But if I were to write to her to ask pardon of her?"

"Do nothing of the kind; she would pardon you."

I was on the point of throwing my arms round Prudence's neck.

A quarter of an hour afterwards, I returned home, and I wrote to Marguerite:—

"Some one who repents of a letter which he wrote yesterday, and who will depart to-morrow if you do not pardon him, wishes to know at what hour he can place his repentance at your feet.

"When will he find you alone? because, you must know it, confessions should be made without witnesses."

I folded up this sort of madrigal in prose, and I sent it by Joseph, who delivered the letter to Marguerite herself, who told him that she would answer it by and by.

I went out but for one minute to dine, and at eleven o'clock in the evening I had not received an answer.

I then resolved not to suffer any longer, and to set out the next day.

In consequence of this resolution, convinced that I should not sleep if I went to bed, I proceeded to pack up my boxes.

CHAPTER XV.

Joseph and I had been occupied for about an hour in preparing for my departure, when some one rang violently at the door.

"Shall I open it?" asked Joseph.

"Yes," said I; wondering who could visit me at such an hour, and not daring to hope that it was Marguerite.

"Monsieur," said Joseph re-entering, "here are two ladies."

"It is we, Armand," said a voice, which I recognised as that of Prudence.

I issued from my bed-chamber.

Prudence, standing, examined the various curiosities in my sitting-room. Marguerite, seated on the sofa, seemed wrapped in thought.

When I entered, I ran to her, I knelt, I took both her hands, and, greatly moved, I exclaimed "Pardon!"

She kissed my forehead, and replied—

"This is already the third time that I have pardoned you."

"I was about to depart to-morrow."

"And in what way can my visit change your intention? I have not come to prevent your quitting Paris. I have come because I had not time, during the day, to answer your letter, and did not wish to leave you to believe that I was angry with you. Prudence, however, was unwilling that I should come. She said that I should, perhaps, disturb you."

"You disturb me, Marguerite? You! And how?"

"Why! you might have a lady with you," replied Prudence; "and it would not have been very amusing for her to witness the arrival of the nurse."

During this observation, Marguerite regarded me attentively.

"My dear Prudence," replied I, "you do not know what you are saying."

"Your apartment is very elegant," replied Prudence; "can one see your sleeping-room?"

"Certainly."

Prudence entered my bed-room, less to examine it, than to repair the absurdity she had just uttered, and to leave us alone—Marguerite and myself.

"Why did you bring Prudence?"

"Because she had been with me to the play; and also, because I wished to have some one to accompany me on leaving here."

"Was I not here?"

"Yes; but besides that I did not wish to disturb you, I was certain that in accompanying me home, you would wish to come up to my apartments; and, as I could not concede this, I did not choose that you should depart with the right to reproach me with a refusal."

"And why could you not receive me at your own house?"

"Because I am closely watched, and the smallest suspicion might, to me, be great injury."

"Is that the only reason?"

"If there were any other, I should tell you. We are at such a point, that we should have no secrets with each other."

"Come, Marguerite, I don't wish to disguise what I have to say; frankly, do you love me a little?"

"Very much."

"Then why play me false?"

"My friend, if I were the duchess of this or that, if I had 200,000 francs of income, if I were then your mistress and had another lover, you would have a right to ask me that question;—but I am Marguerite Gautier,—who am 40,000 francs in debt. I have not a fortune of a sou, and I spend 100,000 francs a year. Your question is therefore idle, and my answer is unnecessary."

"It is true," said I, letting my head drop upon Marguerite's knees; "but I love you like a madman."

"But you must love me a little less, or understand me a little better. Your letter has given me great pain. If

I had been free, I should not, to begin with, have received the Count the day before yesterday; or, having received him, I should have come to ask from you the pardon which you just now asked from me, and I should not, for the future, have any lover but yourself.

"For a moment I believed that I might enjoy, for a few months, the happiness of which we had spoken; but you would not have it. You insist upon knowing the means by which I was to accomplish it. Those means were not difficult to conjecture; but it was a greater sacrifice than you imagined for me to resort to them. I might have said to you, 'I want 20,000 francs;' you were in love with me; you would have obtained them, at the risk of reproaching me hereafter with having done so. I should have preferred to owe you nothing; but you did not understand this feeling of delicacy, for it was such. Girls like me, when we have a little feeling left, give to words and things a scope and an expression unknown to other women; and I repeat to you, therefore, that for Marguerite Gautier, the method which she proposed paying her debts, without asking you for the money necessary for that purpose, was an act of delicacy, which you ought to have adopted without remark. If our acquaintance had commenced to-day, you would have been too happy to accept what I proposed, and you would not ask me what I did the day before yesterday. We are, sometimes, forced to purchase a gratification for our soul at the cost of our bodies; and we suffer greatly when, after all, the promised gratification escapes us."

I gazed upon Marguerite, and listened to her with admiration. When I reflected that this lovely creature, whose feet I should have been delighted to kiss but a short time previously, now consented to give me a part in her thoughts, a share in her life, and that I was not contented, even with this, I could not but ask myself, if man's desires have any limit; when gratified so promptly as mine had been, they already demanded something more.

"It is true," remarked she, "we creatures of chance, we have fantastic wishes and unaccountable loves. We give ourselves, now for one thing, now for another. There

are men who ruin themselves for us, and yet obtain no favour at our hands; while others win us with a bouquet! Our hearts have their caprices,—their sole distraction and their sole excuse. I swear to you that I gave myself to you sooner than I ever did to any other man; and why? Because seeing me raise blood, you took my hand, and you shed tears; because you are the only human creature that ever cared to pity me.

"I am about to say a foolish thing; but it is true. I once had a little dog, who used to gaze sorrowfully upon me when I coughed; and that is the only living thing that I ever loved. When it died, I wept more than at the death of my mother. It is true that the latter had done nothing but beat me for twelve years of her life! Well, I suddenly loved you as much as I had loved my dog. If men knew what they could purchase with a single tear, they would be more beloved, and we should be less ruinous to them!

"Your letter betrayed you. It showed that you had not the true intelligence of the heart, and it weakened my love for you more than anything you could have done. It showed jealousy, it is true, but a jealousy ironical and impertinent. I was already sad when your letter arrived; I expected to see you at noon—to breakfast with you; to efface, in fact, a thought which haunted me, but which before knowing you had caused me no uneasiness.

"Moreover, you were the only person before whom I had imagined that I could think and speak freely. All those who surround girls like me, watch their least word, and seek to draw a meaning from their most insignificant action. Naturally enough, we have no friends. We have selfish lovers, who waste their fortunes—not for us, as they tell us, but to gratify their own vanity.

"For such persons, we must be gay when they are joyous,—in good health when they wish to sup,—sceptics because they are such. We are forbidden to have hearts, under penalty of being hooted and losing our credit.

"We no longer belong to ourselves. We are no longer beings, but things. We occupy the first place in their self-love, the last in their esteem. We have friends: but

they are friends like Prudence—women who formerly lived as we do, and who still retain the habits of expense which their age no longer permits them the means of indulging. They then become our friends, or rather our pensioners. Their friendship extends to servility, but never to disinterestedness. They never give us any but mercenary advice. Little do they care if we have ten lovers at once, provided that they receive in consequence a dress or a bracelet, and that they can occasionally take a drive in our carriage, or have a place in our box at the theatre. They have our yesterday's bouquets, and we lend them our cashmeres. They never render us any service, however trifling, without making us pay double what it is worth. You yourself saw, that on the evening when Prudence brought me six thousand francs, which I had sent her to the Duke for, she borrowed five hundred francs, which she will never pay me, or pay me in bonnets that I shall never wear.

"We can have, then,—or, rather, *I* could have,—but one happiness—sad as I sometimes am, suffering as I always do—that of finding a man sufficiently superior not to demand an account of my life, and to be the lover of my imagination rather than of my person. Such a man I had found in the Duke; but the Duke is old, and age neither protects nor sympathises. I had fancied that I could lead the life which he offered me: but what will you have? I was dying of *ennui*, and if one must die, one would prefer throwing one's self into the fire, or being suffocated with charcoal.

"Then I met you;—you, young, ardent, and happy; and I sought to make of you the man whom I had imagined in my solitude. What I loved in you was, not the man that you are, but the man that you are capable of being. You do not accept this character; you reject it as unworthy of you; you are a common-place boor. Do like others: pay me, and let us say no more about it."

Marguerite, fatigued by this long confession, threw herself back upon the sofa; and, to check a slight attack of

coughing, pressed her handkerchief to her lips, and even to her eyes.

"Forgive me! oh, forgive me!" I murmured. "I had begun to comprehend all this, but I wished to hear you say it, my adored Marguerite. Let us forget all else, and remember but one thing—that we belong to each other, that we are young, and that we love each other. Make of me what you will, Marguerite; I am your slave, your dog; but, for Heaven's sake, destroy the letter which I wrote to you, and do not let me go away to-morrow."

Marguerite took my letter from her bosom, and handing to me, said with inexpressible sweetness—

"See, I brought it for you."

I destroyed the letter, and kissed the hand which restored it to me.

At this moment Prudence re-appeared.

"Tell me, Prudence," said Marguerite, "do you know what he asks?"

"He asks pardon."

"Exactly."

"And you grant it."

"I could not help it. But he wants something else."

"What is it?"

"He wishes to come and sup with us."

"And you consent?"

"What do you think about it?"

"I think you are two children who have not a head between you. But I think, also, that I am very hungry, and that the sooner you consent the sooner we shall sup."

"And then," said Marguerite, "my carriage will hold three. By the way," added she, turning towards me, "Nanine will be in bed; you must open the door. Take my key, and try not to lose it again."

I smothered Marguerite with kisses.

Joseph entered at this moment.

"Monsieur," said he, with the air of a man who is proud of what he has accomplished, "the trunks are packed."

"Completely?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. Then *un*pack them again. I am not going away."

CHAPTER XVI.

I MIGHT have told you, continued Armand, the history of this *liaison* in a few words; but I wished you to see by what means and by what gradation we had come to this point: I, to consent to whatever Marguerite desired; she, to being unable to live without me.

It was on the day after the evening of her visit to me, that I sent her *Manon Lescaut*.

From that moment, as I could not change the mode of life of my mistress, I changed my own. Of all things, I was most desirous not to leave myself time to reflect upon the character which I had accepted; for, in spite of myself, I should have been very sad. My ordinarily calm life, therefore, suddenly assumed an air of noise and disorder. And do not imagine, that, however disinterested the attachment of such a girl, it costs nothing. Nothing is so dear as the thousand caprices of flowers, of boxes, of suppers, and of rural parties, which one can never refuse to his mistress.

As I have told you, I had no fortune. My father was, and still is, Receiver-General at C——. He has a high reputation for integrity, thanks to which he was able to obtain the money which it was necessary to deposit before entering upon his functions. This office produces him 40,000 francs per year; and during the ten years that he has held it, he has reimbursed the money advanced for his deposit, and laid up a dowry for my sister. My father is the most honourable man that can be imagined. My mother, at her death, left 6,000 francs of income, which he divided between my sister and me, the moment that he

obtained the appointment in question ; and in addition to this, when I attained the age of twenty-one, he gave me an annuity of 5,000 francs ;—assuring me that with 8,000 francs, I might live exceedingly well in Paris, if I chose, besides making for myself a vocation, either in the law or in medicine. I came, therefore, to Paris, pursued my studies, was admitted to the bar, and like too many other young men, I put my diploma in my pocket, and abandoned myself to the indolent and careless life of Paris. My expenses were very moderate ; but I spent in eight months my year's income, and then passed the four summer months at my father's house, which gave me, practically, an income of 12,000 francs, and the reputation of a dutiful son.

But I was not a penny in debt.

Such were my circumstances when I became acquainted with Marguerite.

You will understand that, in my own despite, my expense of living was augmented. Marguerite was of a very capricious nature, and was one of those women who have never regarded as an expense of any importance, the cost of the thousand little distractions of which their life is made up. The result was, that wishing to pass as much time as possible with me, she would write to me in the morning, that she would dine with me ;—not at her own apartments, but at some restaurant either in town or country. I would call for her ; we would dine, go to the play, and very often take supper ; so that by the evening I had spent four or five louis d'or, which made 2,500 or 3,000 francs per month, and so reduced my year to about three months and a half, and placed me in the position of either running in debt, or quitting Marguerite.

Of course, I adopted any but this latter alternative.

Forgive me, for troubling you with all these details ; but you will see that they were the causes of the events which are to follow. What I am narrating is a true and real history, to which I leave all its natural simplicity of incident and of development.

I soon began to understand, therefore, that, as nothing on earth could induce me to abandon my mistress, it was

imperative that I should find some means of meeting the expenses which she caused me to incur. Besides which, this passion absorbed me so completely, that the moments which I passed away from Marguerite became years ; and I felt the necessity of consuming those moments by the fire of some passion or other, and thus to spend them so rapidly as not to perceive the lapse of time.

I commenced by borrowing 6,000 francs upon my small capital, and I began to play ; for since the gambling-houses have been closed, people gamble everywhere. Formerly, when a man entered Frascati's, it was with a *chance* of making his fortune. He played against actual money, and if he lost, he had at least the consolation of knowing that he might have won ; while now, except in the clubs—where there is still a certain rigour respecting payment—one has almost the certainty that if he wins a sum of any importance, he will never receive it. The reason is easy to conceive.

Play is resorted to only by young men having extensive wants, and lacking the fortune requisite to sustain the sort of life that they lead. They play, therefore ; and the natural result is this :—either they win, and the losers then furnish the money to pay for the horses and the mistresses of these youths, which is very droll ;—or they lose, and as they already lack the money to live upon, they must only the more peremptorily lack that wherewith to pay their losses, which is very unpleasant. They begin to get into debt, relations commenced around a green-covered table, finish by quarrels in which both honour and life suffer considerably ; and when one really is an honest man, he is liable to find himself ruined by worthy young fellows, whose great fault appears to be that they are not in the possession of incomes of two hundred thousand francs.

I need not speak of those who cheat at play, and of whom one learns, some say, either the compulsory departure, or the tardy punishment.

I plunged wildly, therefore, into this mad and exciting life, which it had before affrighted me only to look upon,

but which had become the inevitable complement of my love for Marguerite.

During the nights which I did not pass in the Rue d'Antin, I should not have slept had I remained at home. Jealousy would have made me sleepless; while play diverted for the moment the fever which would have consumed my heart, and poured it upon a passion, the interest of which fascinated me, in spite of myself, until the hour when I was to repair to Marguerite. At that hour, at that moment,—and in this I detected the power which my love possessed over me,—whether I was gaining or losing, I left the table unhesitatingly, pitying those who remained, and who could not, like me, find happiness in leaving it.

For most persons, play is a necessity; for me it was a remedy.

Cured of Marguerite, I should have been cured of play.

Thus, in the midst of all this, I retained my coolness. I lost no more than I could pay, and I won no more than I could have afforded to lose.

Moreover, chance favoured me. I incurred no debts, and yet I expended three times as much money as I did before I began to play. It was not easy to escape from a life which permitted me, without embarrassing myself, to satisfy the thousand caprices of Marguerite. As for herself, she continued to love me as much as ever, or even more.

As I have told you, I began by being received only from midnight until six o'clock in the morning,—then I was admitted occasionally to her box,—and she would come sometimes to dine with me. One morning, however, I did not leave her until eight o'clock, and at length there came a day when I did not depart till noon.

Pending the moral metamorphosis, a physical change had taken place in Marguerite. I had undertaken to cure her, and the poor girl, divining my purpose, had obeyed me to prove her gratitude. I had thus succeeded, without effort, in isolating her almost completely from her former associations and habits. My physician, whom I had con-

sulted about her, had told me that nothing but repose and quiet could preserve her health; and for the suppers and whole nights of dissipation, I had succeeded in substituting a system of diet, and regular hours of sleep. In her own despite, Marguerite habituated herself to this new existence,—the beneficial effects of which she so sensibly felt. She began already to pass whole evenings at home; or even, if the weather were fine, she would wrap herself in a shawl, cover her head with a veil, and we would go together, like two children, to spend the evening in the shaded alleys of the Champs Elysées. She would return fatigued, sup lightly, retire after playing a few airs upon her piano, or even after having read for a short time,—a thing which she had never before done. In this way her health was rapidly restored. The cough, which had formerly seemed to rend my own chest every time that I heard it, had almost entirely disappeared.

At the end of six weeks, there was no longer any question of the Count. He was definitely sacrificed. The Duke alone made it necessary for me to conceal my *liaison* with Marguerite; and even he had been often dismissed while I was there, under pretext that Marguerite was sleeping and had forbidden that any one should wake her.

It constantly happened, therefore, from the habit, and even the necessity, which Marguerite had acquired, of seeing me, that I left the gambling-table at the precise moment at which an expert player would have quitted it. And on making up my accounts, I found myself master of some 10,000 francs; which seemed to me an inexhaustible capital.

The period at which I was accustomed to visit my father and sister had arrived, and yet I did not go; and I began to receive frequent letters, from one or the other, begging me to come to them. To all these requests, I made the best reply that I could invent; repeating constantly that I was very well and not in want of money;—two things which, I was persuaded, would console my father somewhat for the delay of my annual visit.

Amidst all this, it chanced one morning, that Marguerite being wakened by a brilliant sunshine, sprung out of her bed, and asked me if I would take her into the country for the day.

We sent for Prudence, and all three of us started, after Marguerite had directed Nanine to tell the Duke that she had taken advantage of so lovely a day, and had gone into the country with Madame Duvernoy.

Besides the fact that her presence was necessary to satisfy the Duke, Prudence was one of those persons who seem to be made expressly for these country parties. With her invariable gaiety, and her eternal appetite, she could not leave a moment's *ennui* to those whom she accompanied, and was admirably experienced in ordering the eggs, the cherries, the stewed rabbit, and the various trifles which form the traditional breakfast of the environs of Paris.

It only remained for us to know where we were going.

It was Prudence again who relieved our embarrassment.

"Do you wish to go *really* into the country?" asked she.

"Yes."

"Very well, then; let us go to Bougival, to the 'Break of Day,' kept by the widow Arnold.—Armand, go and hire a carriage."

An hour and a half later we were at the widow Arnold's.

You perhaps know this *auberge;* hotel during the week, pleasure-garden on the Sunday. From the garden, which is on the level of an ordinary first floor, there is a magnificent prospect. On the left, the aqueduct of Marly bounds the horizon; on the right, the view extends over an infinity of hills; the river, almost without current at this point, unrolls itself like a vast white riband, between the plain of the Gabillons and the Isle of Croissy, cradled amidst its high poplars and whispering willows.

At one's foot, in the broad sunshine, rise numerous little white houses with their red roofs,—and manufactories, which, losing in the distance their vulgar and commercial character, charmingly complete the landscape.

In the distance lay Paris, shrouded in the haze. As

Prudence had said, it was really "the country;" and I must confess also, that we made a real breakfast.

It is not in acknowledgment of the happiness which I have enjoyed there, that I say all this; for, despite its frightful name, Bougival is one of the prettiest places that can be imagined. I have travelled a great deal, and have seen many grand things; but never one more charming than this little village, gaily nestled at the foot of the hill which protects it.

Madame Arnold offered to take us upon the water in a boat; a proposition which was accepted with delight by Marguerite and Prudence.

Love and the country are always associated in idea, and justly so; nothing surrounds so appropriately the woman of our love, as the blue sky, the sweet odours, the flowers, the breeze, and the glowing sunlight of the woods or the fields. However tenderly one may love a woman, however absolute his confidence in her, whatever certainty for the future he may be able to derive from the past, one is always more or less jealous. If you have ever been in love, —seriously in love,—you must have experienced this wish of isolating from the world the being whom you desire should live only and entirely for yourself. It would appear that, however indifferent she may be to those who surround her, the beloved object loses something of its perfume and exclusiveness by mere association with men and things. I felt this especially. My love was not an ordinary passion. I was as much in love as a human being could be, but it was with Marguerite Gautier; which is to say, that at Paris, at every step I might jostle some man who had been her lover, or who might be such the next day; while in the country, amidst people whom we had never seen, and who did not trouble themselves about us,—surrounded by nature in all the loveliness of spring, and separated from the noise of the town, I could love in secret, and love without shame or apprehension.

The courtezan disappeared by degrees; and I had beside me a young and beautiful girl, whom I loved, who loved me, and who was named Marguerite. The past was

forgotten, or remembered too vaguely to cause any uneasiness. The sun shone upon her, as it would have done upon the chastest bride. We wandered together amid those charming scenes which appear to have been created expressly to recall the poems of Lamartine, or echo the melodies of Scudo. Marguerite was dressed in white,—she hung upon my arm,—she repeated to me, in the evening and beneath the starry sky, the words which she had uttered on the previous day; or the distant world continued its busy life, without darkening by its shadow the smiling picture of our youth and love.

Such was the dream which, through the overshadowing leaves, was brought to me by the glowing sunshine of this day; while reclined at length upon the turf of the little islet where we had landed, I allowed my thoughts—free from all the human ties which before restrained them—to wander at will, and gather, like flowers, all the hopes that bloomed upon their path.

Add to this, that from the place where we were, I saw upon the shore a charming little house of two storeys, enclosed by a semi-circular railing; within the railing a lawn smooth as velvet, and behind the house a little wood, full of shady nooks, and in whose verdant moss the footsteps impressed to-day would disappear by the morrow.

Climbing and flowering plants covered the porch, and mounted to the upper windows of this lovely cottage.

From continued gazing upon this cottage, I began to regard it as mine, so exactly did it adapt itself to the dream that I had been indulging. I seemed to see Marguerite and myself, during the day, in the wood which covered the slope; at night seated upon the velvet turf of the lawn; and I asked myself if human beings had ever been happier than we could be thus.

"What a sweet cottage!" said Marguerite, who had followed the direction of my eyes, and perhaps of my thoughts also.

"Where?" asked Prudence.

"Over yonder;" and Marguerite pointed to the house in question.

"Oh! lovely!" exclaimed Prudence. "It pleases you?"

"Very much."

"Well, then, tell the Duke to hire it for you. He will do it, I am certain. I will undertake to bring it about, if you choose."

Marguerite looked at me, as if to see my opinion of this new suggestion.

My dream had vanished so abruptly with the last words of Prudence, and had precipitated me so rudely into the region of reality, that I was still half stunned with the fall.

"Really, it is an excellen idea," I stammered out, without well knowing what I said.

"Very well, I will manage it all," said Marguerite, pressing my hand, and interpreting my words according to her own wishes. "We will go at once, and see if it is to be let."

The house was vacant, and to let for 2,000 francs per annum.

"Shall you be happy here?" asked Marguerite.

"Am I sure of coming here?"

"And for whom should I bury myself here, if not for you?"

"Then let me hire this house for you myself."

"Are you mad? Not only is that needless, but it would be dangerous. You know that I have the right to accept such favours from only one man. Leave me to manage it, therefore, you great child, and say nothing."

"The result will be," said Prudence, "that when I have two days that I can call my own, I shall come and pass them with you."

We quitted the house, and took the road to Paris, while discussing this new plan. I held Marguerite in my arms, and the consequence was that by the time we descended from the carriage, I had begun to look upon the scheme in a much less scrupulous spirit than I did at first.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE next day, Marguerite dismissed me very early, saying that the Duke was to come soon, and promising to write to me as soon as he had gone, to give me the usual rendezous for the evening.

In fact, during the day, I received this message :—

"I am going to Bougival with the Duke ; be with Prudence this evening, at eight o'clock."

At the hour indicated, Marguerite had returned, and came to join me at Madame Duvernoy's.

"Well, all is arranged," said she as she entered.

"Is the house hired?" asked Prudence.

"Yes, he consented directly."

I did not know the Duke, but I was ashamed to deceive him as I was doing.

"But that is not all," continued Marguerite.

"What more then?"

"I have been thinking about a lodging for Armand."

"In the same house?" asked Prudence, laughing.

"No, but at 'The Break of Day,' where the Duke and I breakfasted. Whilst he contemplated the view, I asked Madame Arnold (for it is Madame Arnold that she calls herself, is it not?) I asked her if she had an apartment suitable. She had one, with sitting-room, ante-room, and bed-room. That is all that is necessary, I believe. Sixty francs a month. The whole furnished in a fashion to amuse a hypocondriac. I took this lodging—have I done right?"

I embraced her by way of reply.

"That will be charming," she continued ; "you will have a key of the little door, and I have promised the Duke a key of the gate, which he will not take, since when he does come, he will only come in the day time. I believe, between us, that he is enchanted with this caprice, which takes me from Paris for a time, and will cause his family to be silent. However, he asked me how I, who love Paris so

much, could decide upon burying myself in the country. I replied that I was not well, and that it was to repose myself. He seemed to believe me, but not completely. This poor old man is always kept at bay. We will therefore take many precautions, my dear Armand, for he will cause me to be watched down yonder; and it is not enough that he hires me a house, it is necessary that he should also pay my debts, of which, unfortunately, I have plenty. Does that suit you?"

"Yes," I replied, striving to silence all the scruples which this mode of life roused from time to time within me.

"We examined the house in all its details; it will suit us to a nicety. The Duke looked into everything. Ah, my dear," added the mad girl embracing me, "you are not unlucky; it is a millionnaire who provides for you."

"And when do you move in?" asked Prudence.

"As soon as possible."

"Do you take your carriage and horses?"

"I shall take my whole household. You will take charge of my apartment during my absence."

Eight days after, Marguerite had taken possession of the country house, and I was installed at "The Break of Day."

Then commenced an existence which I should find the greatest difficulty in describing to you.

At the commencement of her sojourn at Bougival, Marguerite could not break off altogether with her old habits, and as she always kept open house, all her female friends came to see her. During one month, not a day passed that Marguerite had not eight or ten people at her table. Prudence, on her side, brought thither all the people she knew, and did them the honours of the house, just as if it had belonged to her.

The Duke's money paid for all this, as you may well believe; nevertheless it happened occasionally, that Prudence came to ask me for a note of 1,000 francs, professedly in the name of Marguerite. You know that I had gained considerably at play; I was eager, therefore, to give to Prudence what Marguerite asked through her, and

for fear that she might want more than I had, I borrowed in Paris a sum equal to that which I had already previously borrowed, and which I had punctually repaid.

I thus found myself again the possessor of a sum of a 10,000 francs, without counting my annuity.

However, the pleasure which Marguerite experienced in receiving her friends, relaxed somewhat in view of the expense to which this pleasure dragged her on, and above all, on account of the necessity in which she was placed of occasionally asking money of me. The Duke, who had hired this house for Marguerite that she might repose herself, discontinued his visits, as he was in fear of meeting a joyous and numerous company, by whom he did not wish to be seen. This was caused especially by the fact, that, coming one day to dine alone with Marguerite, he had stumbled into the midst of a party of fifteen persons, who had not done breakfasting at the hour when he expected to sit down to dinner. Suspecting nothing, he had opened the door of the dining-room, when a universal laugh greeted his entrance, and he was forced to retire suddenly before the impertinent gaiety of the girls who were present.

Marguerite rose from the table, and found the Duke in the adjoining room, when she endeavoured as much as possible to make him forget this adventure; but the old man, wounded in his self-love, could not overcome his anger; he said cruelly enough to the poor girl that he was tired of paying for the follies of a woman, who did not even know how to make him respected at her house, and he went away greatly displeased.

From that day we had not heard him spoken of. Marguerite had been obliged to dismiss her guests, to change her habits, and the Duke had given no news of himself. I had gained the knowledge that my mistress more completely belonged to me, and that my dream was at length being realised. Marguerite could no longer do without me. Without disturbing herself as to what might be the result of it, she publicly avowed our *liaison*, and it had come to my residing in her house. The servants called me Monsieur, and looked upon me officially as their master.

Prudence remonstrated with Marguerite respecting the life we were leading; but she replied that she so loved me that she could not live without me, and that, whatever might result from it, she would not renounce the happiness of having me unceasingly near to her; adding, that all those whom this course did not please were free to leave her.

This is what I heard one day when Prudence said to Marguerite that she had something very important to communicate to her, and when I listened at the door of the room in which they had closeted themselves.

A little while after Prudence returned to Bougival.

I was at the bottom of the garden when she entered; and she did not see me. I fancied from the manner in which Marguerite went to meet her, that a conversation similar to that which I had overheard was again about to take place, and I wished to hear it like I had heard the other.

The two women shut themselves up in a boudoir, and I placed myself so as to listen.

"Well?" asked Marguerite.

"Well! I have seen the Duke."

"What did he say to you?"

"That he would willingly pardon you the first scene, but that he had learned that you lived openly with M. Armand Duval, and this he would not pardon you. 'Let Marguerite leave this young man,' he said, 'and as I used to do I will give her all that she wishes; if not, she must renounce asking me for anything whatever!'"

"What did you answer?"

"That I would communicate his decision to you, and I promised him to make you hear reason. Reflect, my dear child, on the position which you lose, and which Armand can never render you back again. He loves you with all his soul, but his fortune is not large enough to supply all your wants, and he must leave you some day, when it will be too late, and the Duke will do nothing more for you. Do you wish me to speak to Armand?"

Marguerite seemed to reflect, for she did not answer. My heart beat violently whilst awaiting her reply.

"No," she replied, "I will not leave Armand, and I

shall not hide myself in order to live with him. It is perhaps a folly; but what would you have? And then, he has got the habitude of loving me without hindrance; he would suffer too much to be obliged to leave me, if it were only an hour a-day. Moreover, I have not such a great time to live that I need make myself unhappy, and perform the wishes of an old man, the sight of whom merely causes me to grow old. Let him keep his money—I do not want it!"

"But what will you do?"

"I don't know at all!"

Prudence was doubtless about to answer something, but I entered suddenly and threw myself at Marguerite's feet, covering her hands with the tears which the joy of being thus loved caused me to shed.

"My life is yours, Marguerite; you no longer have any want of that man—am I not here? Shall I ever abandon you, and can I ever repay you the happiness which you give to me? No more constraint, my Marguerite; we love each other, what does the rest matter to us?"

"Oh yes, I love you, my Armand," she murmured, enlacing her two arms around my neck; "I love you, as I did not believe I could have loved. We will be happy, we will live tranquilly, and I will bid an eternal adieu to that life for which I now blush. You will never reproach me with the past, will you?"

The tears veiled my voice. I could not answer otherwise than by pressing Marguerite to my heart.

"Well," she said, turning to Prudence, and with a voice still moved, "you will describe this scene to the Duke, and you will add, that we have no want of him."

From that day there was no further question of the Duke. Marguerite was no longer the girl that I had known. She avoided all those habits of the life in the midst of which I had met her, and which might have ruined me. Never did a wife, never did a sister, have for her husband or her brother the affectionate care which she had for me. Her morbid temperament was susceptible to every impression, accessible to every feeling. She had broken off with her

friend, as well as with her habits; with her language, as well as with her previous expenses. When we were seen on our way from the house to go upon the water, in a charming little boat that I had bought, one would never have believed that that woman—dressed in a white dress, covered with a large straw bonnet, and carrying upon her arm the simple silk pelisse, which was to protect her from the cool air of the water—was that Marguerite Gautier, who, four months before, was notorious for her extravagance and her reckless mode of life.

Alas, we hastened to be happy, as if we had divined that we could not always be so.

Two months passed without our even visiting Paris. No one came to see us, excepting Prudence and this Julie Duprat, of whom I have spoken to you, and to whom was afterwards entrusted the touching recital which I have received.

I spent entire days at the feet of my mistress. We opened the windows which looked out upon the garden, and while regarding the summer display, itself joyous in the flowers which it caused to open, under the shade of the trees, we respired together that true life which neither Marguerite nor I had understood till then.

This girl displayed child-like astonishment at the smallest trifles. There were days when she would run about the garden like a girl of ten years, after a butterfly or a lady-bird. This courtesan, who had expended in bouquets more money than would have been necessary to support, joyfully, an entire family, would sit down sometimes upon the grass, examining, for an hour at a time, the simple flower, the name of which she bore.*

It was during this period that she so often read *Manon Lescaut*. I surprised her many times making notes in this book; and she always said to me, that when a woman loves, she cannot do what Manon had done.

The Duke wrote to her two or three times. She recognised the hand, and gave me the letters without reading them.

* La Marguerite—the Daisy.

Sometimes the tone of his letters caused the tears to come to my eyes.

He had believed, in closing his purse against Marguerite, that he would have brought her back to him; but when he had seen the inutility of this method, he had written, asking from her permission to visit her as before, whatever might be the conditions under which such visits were to be made.

After I had read these pressing and reiterated letters, I tore them up, without telling Marguerite what they contained, and without advising her to see the poor old man, although a feeling of pity for his grief inclined me to do so; but I feared that she might see in this counsel a desire to cause the Duke again to undertake the expenses of the house; I feared, above all, that she would think me capable of disowning the responsibility of her life throughout all the consequences into which her love for me might lead me.

It resulted from this that the Duke, receiving no answer, ceased to write, and that Marguerite and I continued to live together without occupying ourselves with the future.

CHAPTER XVIII.

To describe our new life in detail would be difficult. It consisted of a series of almost childish pleasures, charming for us, but unmeaning to others. You know what it is to love; you know how rapidly each day passes, and with what loving indolence one allows to-day to lapse into to-morrow. You are not ignorant of that sweet forgetfulness of all things else, which is caused by a passionate, mutual, and confiding affection. Every being except the beloved seems superfluous in the creation. You regret having already cast away, as it were, portions of your heart upon other women, and you do not believe it possible that you can ever press with fondness any other hand than that which you now hold between your own. The mind permits neither labour

nor reflection—nothing, in fact, that might disturb the one thought which is constantly cherished. Each day the lover discovers in his mistress a new charm—an unknown attraction.

Existence becomes only the realisation of one continuous desire—the soul merely the vessel charged to keep alive the sacred flame of love.

We frequently at night betook ourselves to the little wood which overlooked our retreat. There we could listen to the gentle harmonies of the evening, while both dreamt of the approaching hour which was to lock us in each others' arms till the morrow.

At other times, we would remain in bed the whole day, without allowing even the sun to intrude into our chamber. The curtains were hermetically closed, and the outer world seemed for us to pause a moment in its progress. Nanine alone had the right to open our door, and that only in order to bring us our meals, which we took without rising, and interrupting them constantly by laughter and mirth. To this would succeed a few moments of sleep—for submerged in our love, we were like resolute divers, who come to the surface only when forced to do so in order to take breath.

Nevertheless, I observed some moments of sadness, and even some tears, on the part of Marguerite; and once, when I asked her their cause, she replied—

"Our love is not an ordinary passion, dear Armand. You love me as if I had never belonged to any one else; and I tremble lest, hereafter, repenting of your love, and making a crime of my past life, you should force me to throw myself into that existence, from the midst of which you took me. Consider, that now I have tasted the delights of a new life, I should die in being forced to resume the other. Assure me, then, that you will never leave me."

"I swear it to you!"

At these words, she gazed upon me, as though to read in my eyes if my oath were sincere; then she threw herself into my arms, and hiding her face in my bosom, said,

"But you do not know how much I love you!"

One evening, we were leaning outside the balcony of our window. We gazed upon the moon, which seemed to strug-

gle with difficulty through the masses of cloud that surrounded it, and we listened to the wind rustling the trees with violence; we held each other by the hand, and for perhaps a quarter of an hour not a word had been spoken, when Marguerite said to me,

"You see that winter is coming. Shall we leave this place?"

"And to go whither?"

"To Italy."

"You are weary, then?"

"I dread the winter—I dread your return to Paris."

"And why?"

"For many reasons."

And she added abruptly, without giving me the grounds of her fears,

"Will you go? I will sell all that I have—we will live there upon the money; nothing will remain of what I have been—no one will know who I am. Do you wish it?"

"Let us go, if you desire it, Marguerite—let us take a journey," said I; "but where is the necessity for selling those things, which you will be glad to find again on your return? I have not a sufficient fortune to accept any very great sacrifice, but I have enough to permit us to travel in grand style for five or six months, if it will afford you the least pleasure to do so."

"After all—*no!*" continued she, quitting the window, and seating herself upon the sofa in the darkness of her chamber; "why spend money in travelling? I cost you quite enough here."

"You reproach me with it, Marguerite. That is not generous."

"Forgive me, my friend," said she, offering me her hand; "this stormy weather affects my nerves; I say what I do not mean to say."

And after embracing me, she fell into a profound reverie.

Such scenes were of frequent occurrence; and if I was unaware of their cause, I nevertheless detected in Marguerite a feeling of anxiety about the future. She could not doubt my love, for it increased every day; and yet I often found her sad, without her ever explaining to me the reason

of her sadness, otherwise than by attributing it to some physical cause.

Fearing that she was becoming weary of a life so monotonous, I proposed to return to Paris; but she invariably rejected this proposal, and assured me that she should be nowhere else so happy as she was in the country.

Prudence came but rarely, but, on the other hand, she constantly wrote letters, which I had never desired to see, although they sometimes threw Marguerite into fits of profound abstraction. I could not tell what to imagine.

One day Marguerite remained in her apartment. I entered, and found her writing.

"To whom are you writing?"

"To Prudence. Shall I read to you what I write?"

I had a horror of anything which could appear like suspicion, and I replied, therefore, that I did not wish to know what she was writing; but I was nevertheless persuaded in my own mind that this letter would have told me the cause of her sadness.

On the following day the weather was superb. Marguerite proposed that we should go upon the water, and visit the Isle of Croissy. She seemed very gay: it was five o'clock before we returned.

"Madame Duvernoy has been," said Nanine, as soon as we returned.

"Has she gone again?" demanded Marguerite.

"Yes—in Madame's carriage. She said it was so arranged."

"That will do!" said Marguerite, briskly. "Let us have dinner."

Two days afterwards, a letter arrived from Prudence; and for a fortnight afterwards Marguerite seemed to have entirely conquered her mysterious melancholy, for which she never ceased to apologise, after it had passed away.

But the carriage did not return.

"How is it that Prudence does not send back your brougham?" said I, one day.

"One of the horses is ill; and besides, the carriage wants some repairs; and it was best to have them done

while we are here, where we have no need of a carriage, instead of waiting until we return to Paris."

Prudence came to see us some few days afterwards, and confirmed what Marguerite had said.

The two women walked by themselves in the garden, and when I joined them they evidently changed their conversation.

When Prudence went away in the evening, she complained of the cold, and asked Marguerite to lend her a cashmere.

Another month passed, during which Marguerite was more gay and more affectionate than ever.

But the carriage did not return—the cashmere was not sent back; and this puzzled me, in spite of myself; and as I knew the drawer in which Marguerite kept the letters received from Prudence, I took advantage of a moment when she was at the bottom of the garden, to run to this drawer and endeavour to open it—but it was in vain—the drawer was securely locked.

I then examined the drawers in which Marguerite ordinarily kept her diamonds and other jewellery. Those opened without difficuty; but the jewel-cases had disappeared, and with them their contents, of course.

A distressing apprehension seized me.

I was about to ask Marguerite the truth of all this, but I felt certain that she would not avow it to me.

"My dear Marguerite," said I, "I come to ask your permission to go to Paris. My family do not know where I am, and there will be letters from my father awaiting me. He will be uneasy, no doubt, and I must answer them."

"Go, my friend, but return in good time."

I went.

I hastened to Prudence.

"Come," said I, without other preliminary, "answer me frankly: where are Marguerite's horses?"

"Sold."

"The cashmere?"

"Sold."

"The diamonds?"

"Pledged."

"And who has sold and pledged all these?"

"Myself."

"Why did you not not inform me beforehand?"

"Because Marguerite forbade me."

"But why not ask me for money?"

"Because she would not allow it."

"And what has become of all the money?"

"Paid away?"

"She owes a great deal, then?"

"About thirty thousand francs still. Ah! my dear friend, I told you so! you would not believe me—now you are convinced. The upholsterer whom the Duke had undertaken to pay was shown the door when he called upon him, and received a letter next day to say that the Duke would do nothing for Mademoiselle Gautier. This man would have money; he has had some sums on account, which were the few thousand francs I have had from you. Afterwards, some charitable souls informed him that Marguerite, abandoned by the Duke, was living with a young man with no fortune. The other creditors were told the same thing; they demanded money, and made seizures. Marguerite wished to sell everything, but there was no longer time, and, besides, I opposed it. It was, however, necessary to pay; and to avoid asking you for money, she sold her horses and her cashmeres, and pledged her jewels. Would you like to see the receipts and the duplicates?"

And Prudence, opening a drawer, showed me the papers in question.

"Ah! you believe me now," said she with the terrible persistence of a woman where she happens to be in the right. "Ah! you fancy that it suffices to be in love, and to go and live a pastoral life in the country. No, my friend, no! side by side with the ideal life comes the material life, and the most ethereal resolutions are bound to earth by ridiculously fine threads,—but they are of iron, and not easily broken. If Marguerite has not played you false twenty times, it is that she is of a nature altogether exceptional. I do not blame myself for having counselled

her to act otherwise than as she has done, for it pained me to see the poor girl strip herself of everything. But she would not hear of it: she replied that she loved you, and would not be false to you for anything in the world. All this is very pretty, and very poetical; but it is not with such money that one pays one's creditors, and now she can go no further;—at least, I repeat, unless she has 30,000 francs."

"Very well; I will give you that sum."

"You are about to borrow it?"

"Most certainly."

"You are about to do a nice thing! Embroil yourself with your father, and encumber your resources: not to mention that one does not thus find 30,000 francs between to-day and to-morrow. Believe me, my dear Armand, I know women better than you do; do not commit this folly, which you will one day bitterly repent. Be reasonable. I do not tell you to leave Marguerite, but live with her as you did at the beginning of the summer. Let her find means to escape from the embarrassment. Her Duke will return to her by degrees. The Count de N——, if she accepts him (he told me so again only yesterday), will pay all her debts, and give her 5,000 or 6,000 francs a month. He has an income of 200,000 francs. That would be a position for her; while, as to you, it will certainly be still necessary that you should leave her; and you should not wait until you are ruined before doing so. Besides which, this Count de N—— is a fool; and there will be nothing to prevent you from still being Marguerite's lover. She will no doubt weep sadly at the outset; but she will finish by becoming habituated to it, and will thank you, one day, for what you will have done: you have only to imagine that Marguerite is married, and that you deceive the husband,—that is all.

"I have told you all this before; but then it was a piece of advice, now it is almost a necessity."

Prudence was terribly near the truth.

"See how it is," said she, putting away the papers which she had shown me, "women like us always foresee

that they will be loved, never that they will love; or, otherwise, they would lay up money, and at thirty years of age could afford the luxury of having a lover for nothing. Oh! if I had only known once what I know now!

"Finally, say nothing to Marguerite, but bring her to Paris. You have lived five or six months alone with her,—that should satisfy you. Shut your eyes,—that is all that is asked of you. At the end of a fortnight she will take the Count de N——; she will economise this winter, and next summer you can begin again. See how these things are managed, my dear fellow!"

And Prudence seemed quite enchanted with the wisdom of her advice, which I indignantly rejected.

Neither my love nor my dignity would permit me to adopt such a course; but I was also well convinced that, at the point at which Marguerite had arrived, she would sooner die than consent to this partition of herself.

"That is enough in the way of jesting; how much does Marguerite really need?"

"I have told you—30,000 francs."

"And when must this sum be paid?"

"Within two months."

"She shall have it."

Prudence shrugged her shoulders.

"I will furnish it to you, but you must swear to me that you will not tell Marguerite that it is I who have supplied it."

"Make yourself easy."

"And if she sends you anything to sell or pledge, inform me."

"There is no danger. She has nothing left."

I left Prudence, and went to my own apartment to see if there were any letters from my father. There were four.

CHAPTER XIX.

In the first three letters my father expressed uneasiness at my silence, and inquired its cause. In the last he allowed me to see that he had been informed of my altered mode of life, and announced his immediate visit to Paris.

I have always had a great respect and a sincere affection for my father. I replied to him, therefore, that a little excursion had been the cause of my silence, and I begged him to acquaint me with the day of his intended arrival that I might arrange to meet him.

I gave my servant my address in the country, desiring him to bring me the first letter which should come with the post-mark of my native town, and started immediately for Bougival.

I found Marguerite waiting for me at the garden gate; her countenance betrayed anxiety. She threw her arms around my neck, and could not forbear saying,

"Have you seen Prudence?"

"No."

"You have been a long time in Paris."

"I found letters from my father, which it was necessary to answer."

A few minutes afterwards Nanine entered, quite out of breath. Marguerite rose, and went to speak with her aside.

When Nanine was gone, Marguerite seated herself again beside me, and, taking my hand, said,

"Why did you deceive me? You *have* seen Prudence."

"Who has told you so?"

"Nanine."

"And how does she know it?"

"She followed you."

"You must, then, have told her to follow me?"

"It is true. I thought that there must be some powerful motive to induce you to start thus abruptly for Paris,—you who have never quitted me once in four months. I feared that some misfortune had happened to you; or that, perhaps, you went to see some other woman."

"Child!"

"I am re-assured at present. At least, I know what you have done; but I do not know what you have been told."

I showed Marguerite the letters from my father.

"It is not that which I ask about," said she. "I wish to know for what reason you called upon Prudence."

"To see her."

"You tell an untruth, my friend."

"Well, then, if you *will* know, I went to ask her if the horse was recovering, and if she had any further occasion for your cashmeres and your jewels."

Marguerite changed colour, but made no reply.

"And I have learned," continued I, "the use which you have made of horses, cashmeres, and diamonds."

"And you are displeased with me?"

"I am displeased, that you did not think of asking me for what you needed."

"In a connection like ours," replied Marguerite, "if the woman has still a little self-respect, she will submit to every imaginable sacrifice, rather than ask money from her lover, and give a mercenary aspect to her love. You love me, I am sure; but you do not know how fragile is the tie which binds the heart to the affection entertained for girls like me. Who knows but that on some occasion of annoyance, you might imagine that you could see in our connection nothing but an artfully arranged plan on my part? Prudence is a tattler. What need had I of the horses? I have effected a saving in disposing of them. I can do very well without them, and shall spend no more on their account. So long as you love me, it is all that I desire; and you will love me as much without horses cashmeres, and diamonds, as with them."

All this was said so unaffectedly that the tears sprung to my eyes as I listened.

"But my good Marguerite," replied I, as I tenderly pressed her hands between my own, "you well know that I should one day become acquainted with this sacrifice, and that on the day when I learnt it, I should refuse to suffer it."

"But why?"

"Because, my dear girl, I do not intend that the affection which you are good enough to feel for me, shall deprive you of even one single trinket. Nor am *I* willing, on my part, that in a moment of vexation or weariness you should be able to consider that if you had lived with some one else, such a 'moment' would not have existed, and that you should repent, were it but for a single instant, living with me. In a few days, your horses, your jewels, and your cashmeres will be restored to you. They are as necessary to you as the air you breathe; and, although it is perhaps ridiculous, I love you better sumptuous than simple."

"Then you love me no longer."

"Foolish one!"

"No! for if you loved me, you would leave me to love you also in my own manner; but, on the contrary, you continue to see in me only a girl to whom luxury is indispensable, and whom you feel yourself constantly forced to pay. You are too proud to accept any proofs of my love. In spite of yourself, you think of the possibility of leaving me one day, and you insist upon keeping your delicacy beyond the reach of all suspicion. You are right, my friend; but I had hoped for something better."

And Marguerite made a movement to leave me, but I detained her, saying,

"I wish that you should be happy, and that you should have nothing wherewith to reproach me. That is all."

"And we are about to part!"

"And why? Who can separate us?" cried I.

"Yourself, who will not permit that I should under-

stand your position, while you wish to gratify your pride by preserving mine to me;—you, who in maintaining the luxury in which I have lived, wish to preserve the moral distance which separates us;—you, in short, who do not believe sufficiently in the disinterestedness of my affection to share with me the fortune which you possess, and with which we could live happily, but prefer to ruin yourself, in abject submission to an absurd prejudice. Do you suppose, then, that I put a carriage or trinkets in comparison with your love? Do you imagine that my happiness consists in the vanities with which we occupy ourselves when we love nothing, but which become valueless when one really does love? You will pay my debts, you will absorb your fortune; you will, in fact, keep me—support me! How long will all this last? Two or three months; and then it will be too late to adopt the life which I propose to you, for then you would have to accept everything from me, which is what a man of honour cannot do. Whereas, at present, you have eight or ten thousand francs of income, with which we can live. I will sell what I have that is superfluous, and from this sale alone I can realise 2,000 francs a year. We will have a pretty little suite of apartments, in which we can both live. In the summer we will come to the country; not into a house like this, but a little cottage suitable for two persons. You are independent; I am free; we are both young. In Heaven's name, Armand, do not throw me back into the life which I was formerly forced to lead!"

I could make no reply. Tears of love and admiration filled my eyes, and I could only throw myself into Marguerite's arms.

"I wished," resumed she, "to arrange it all, without saying anything to you; pay all my debts, and prepare my new apartment. In October we shall have returned to Paris, and all will be over; but since Prudence has told you everything, you must consent beforehand, instead of afterwards. Do you love me sufficiently for that?"

It was impossible to resist so much self-devotion. I embraced Marguerite tenderly, and replied,

"I will do whatever you wish."

What she had planned was therefore agreed upon. She then became quite wild with delight. She danced, she sang, she talked of nothing but the new apartment which we were to have,—as to the locality and arrangements of which she already began to consult me.

I saw that she was proud and happy in this new resolution, which seemed to unite us definitely one to another. I was unwilling, therefore, to be behindhand.

In a moment I had decided upon my whole course of life. I determined to abandon permanently to Marguerite the income which I derived from my mother, which seemed to me only too completely insufficient to recompense the sacrifice which I accepted.

There would remain to me the 5,000 francs per annum allowed me by my father, and come what might I should always, by means of this allowance, have enough to live upon.

I did not tell Marguerite what I had resolved upon, for I was convinced that she would refuse this gift.

The income first named was derived from a mortgage of 60,000 francs, upon a house which I had never even seen. All that I knew was, that on each quarter day my father's notary (an old friend of our family) paid me 750 francs upon my simple receipt.

On the day when Marguerite and I came to Paris to look for apartments, I went to the notary, and asked him in what way I ought to proceed to transfer this income to another person.

The worthy man supposed me to be ruined, and questioned me as to the cause of my intended proceeding; and as it would have been necessary, sooner or later, to tell him in whose favour I wished to make this transfer, I preferred to tell him the whole affair on the spot.

To my surprise he made none of those objections which his position as a notary and as friend might have authorised, but he assured me that he would arrange it all in the best manner.

I, of course, enjoined upon him the strictest secrecy

towards my father, and proceeded to meet Marguerite, who awaited me at the apartments of Julie Duprat, where she preferred stopping, to going and listening to a lecture from Prudence.

We commenced our search for apartments. All that we saw Marguerite considered too dear, and I thought them too common. Nevertheless, we finished by agreeing upon a place, and fixed upon a little pavilion, isolated from the adjoining house, in one of the quietest quarters of Paris. Behind this little pavilion extended a beautiful garden, enclosed by walls sufficiently high to separate us from our neighbours, and low enough not to restrict the view.

It was better than we had ventured to hope. While I went to my own apartment to give notice of my intention to leave, Marguerite hastened to a man of business, who, she said, had accomplished for one of her friends that which she was about to ask him to undertake for herself.

She returned to seek me in the Rue de Provence, quite enchanted. This man had engaged to pay all her debts, to give her a full quittance for them, and to hand her 20,000 francs;—in return for the remainder of all her furniture, &c.

You will have seen by the sum which the sale realised, that this man would have gained more than 30,000 francs by his bargain!

We returned joyously to Bougival, continuing to discuss our future prospects; which, thanks to our want of experience, and especially to our love, we beheld under the most glowing colours.

A week afterwards we were at breakfast when Nanine told me that my servant was asking for me. He was shown in.

"Monsieur," said he, "your father has arrived in Paris, and begs you to come at once to your apartments, where he awaits you."

This news was the simplest in the world, yet nevertheless, on nearing it Marguerite and I gazed upon each other, as if we presaged some misfortune in the incident. And although she said nothing to me in reference to the

presentiment which I shared with her, I said, as I took her hand,

"Fear nothing!"

"Return as speedily as possible," murmured Marguerite, as she embraced me; "I shall watch for you at the window."

I sent Joseph to tell my father that I was coming. Two hours afterwards I was in the Rue de Provence.

CHAPTER XX.

My father, in his dressing-gown, was seated at a table in my sitting-room, writing.

I perceived directly, from the manner in which he raised his eyes as I entered, that serious matters were about to be brought forward.

I approached him, however, as if I had divined nothing of the kind, and embraced him as usual.

"When did you arrive, father?"

"Last evening."

"You came directly here, as usual?"

"Yes."

"I much regret not having been here to receive you."

I expected, in reply, to receive the lecture or rebuke which my father's countenance had seemed to promise; but he made no reply, sealed the letter which he was writing, and gave it to Joseph to take to the post.

When we were alone, my father rose, and leaning upon the chimney-piece, said,—

"We have some serious matters to discuss, my dear Armand?"

"I am listening to you, father."

"You promise to be frank?"

"It is my custom."

"Is it true that you are living with a woman named Marguerite Gautier?"

"Yes."

"You know what this woman is?"

"Perfectly."

"It is for her, that you have neglected, this year, to come and see your sister and me?"

"Yes, father, I confess it."

"You love this woman very much, then?"

"You see that it must be so, since she has been the cause of my neglecting a sacred duty,—for which neglect I humbly ask your pardon."

My father had evidently not expected to receive replies quite so explicit, for he seemed to reflect for a moment, and then added,—

"You have evidently understood that you could not always live thus?"

"I have feared it, but I cannot say that I have fully realised it."

"But you must have understood," continued my father in a somewhat sterner tone, "that I should not permit it."

"I have considered, that so long as I did nothing contrary to the respect which I owe to your name, and to the traditionary probity of the family, I could live as I now live;—which has somewhat relieved the fear which I entertained."

Passions give strength as well as sentiments. I was prepared for any struggle—even against my father—to preserve Marguerite.

"The moment has nevertheless come, for you to live in a different manner."

"And why, father?"

"Because you are on the point of doing things which are contrary to the respect which you profess for your family."

"I do not understand your words."

"I will explain them to you. That you have a mistress, may be very well. That you should pay her, as a gentleman ought to pay for the favours of such a woman, is also very proper; but when you neglect things the most sacred for her sake,—when you permit the rumour of your scandalous life to penetrate even to the provincial district

where I live, and cast the shadow of a stain upon the honourable name which I have given you, you attempt that which cannot be, and which shall not be."

"Permit me to say to you, father, that those who have made such statements in regard to me, were ill-informed. I am the lover of Mademoiselle Gautier; I live with her; it is simply true. But I do not give to Mademoiselle Gautier the name which I have received from you; I spend for her only what my means allow me to expend; I have not incurred a single debt;—nor, in short, placed myself in any such position as should authorise a father to say to his son what you have just now said to me."

"A father is always authorised to turn his son aside from the evil ways in which he may find him walking; you have not yet done any harm, but you are about to do it."

"Father!"

"Sir, I know life better than you do. There are no sentiments entirely pure, except with women entirely chaste. Every Manon may make a Desgrieux, and times and manners are changed. It would be useless for the world to grow older, unless it improved. You will leave your mistress?"

"I regret to disobey you, my father, but that is impossible."

"I will compel you to do so."

"Unhappily, father, there are no longer any Isles Saint-Marguerite, where they send courtesans; and were there so, I should follow Mademoiselle Gautier thither, if you caused her to be sent there. What would you have? I am wrong, perhaps; but I cannot be happy, except upon the condition that I remain the lover of this girl."

"Open your eyes, Armand; recognise your father, who has ever loved you, and who desires only your happiness. Is it honourable for you to live like a husband with a girl whom all the world has possessed?"

"What matter, provided no one possesses her hereafter? what matter, provided this girl loves me, if she is regenerated by the love which she has for me, and that which I have for her?"

"And you believe, then, that the mission of a man of honour is to convert courtesans? What will be the conclusion of this marvellous cure, and what will you think of what you now say when you are forty years old? You will laugh at your love, if it is permitted to you still to laugh at it;—if it shall not have left traces too profound upon your life. What would you be at this moment, if your father had had your ideas, and had abandoned himself to every breath of passion, instead of taking his stand firmly upon the basis of honour and good faith? Reflect, Armand; and tell me no more of these follies.—Come, you will leave this woman. Your father entreats you!"

I made no reply.

"Armand," continued my father, "in the name of your sainted mother, listen to me! Renounce this life, which you will forget sooner than you think, and to which you are enchained by a theory utterly impracticable. You are twenty-four years of age;—think of your future. You cannot always continue to love thus this woman, who, on the other hand, will neither always love you. You both exaggerate your love. You shut yourself out from any career in the future. Another step and you will be unable to quit the path you now pursue, and for the rest of your life the remorse of your youth will haunt you. Go, pass a month or two with your sister. Rest and the love of a pious family will soon cure you of the fever, for it is nothing else. In the meantime, your mistress will console herself; she will take another lover, and when you find for whom you have nearly quarrelled with your father, and lost his affection, you will tell me I did well to seek you out, and you will bless me. You will go, will you not, Armand?"

I felt that my father was right, as far as most women are concerned, but I was convinced he was wrong as to Marguerite. Still, the tone in which he had spoken the last words, was so gentle, so supplicating, that I could not reply.

"Well?" he said, in a tone of emotion.

"Well, my father, I can promise you nothing," I said at length; "what you ask of me is beyond my strength.

Believe me," I continued, on seeing him make a gesture of impatience, "you exaggerate the results of this *liaison*. Marguerite is not the girl you think her. This love, far from leading me astray, is capable, on the contrary, of developing in me the most honourable sentiments. True love always makes one better, whatever may be the woman who inspires it. If you knew Marguerite, you would admit that I expose myself to nothing. She is noble as the noblest of women. In proportion as there is cupidity in others, so is there disinterestedness in her."

"Which does not prevent her accepting your whole fortune, for the sixty thousand francs that belong to you from your mother, and which you give her—remember well what I am saying to you—is your only fortune."

My father had probably kept this peroration and this heavy threat, as a last blow for me. I was stronger before his threats than his prayers.

"Who told you I was to abandon this sum to her?" I resumed.

"My lawyer. Would an honest man have done such an act without apprising me? Well, it is to prevent your ruin in favour of this girl, that I am come to Paris. Your mother, on her death, left you enough to live honourably with, and not to squander it in presents to your mistresses."

"I assure you, my father, Marguerite was totally ignorant of this donation."

"And why did you make it, then?"

"Because Marguerite, the woman whom you calumniate so, and whom you wish me to abandon, makes the sacrifice of all she has to live with me."

"And you accept this sacrifice? What a man you are, sir, to permit Mademoiselle Marguerite to sacrifice anything for you? Come, this is enough. You will quit this woman. Just now I entreated you; now I order you. I will not allow such stupidities in my family. Pack up your box, and prepare to follow me."

"Pardon me, my father," I now said; "but I will not go."

"Because ——?"

"Because I am of an age when I am no longer bound to obey an order."

My father turned pale at this reply.

"Very good, sir; I know now what remains for me to do." He rang. Joseph appeared.

"Take my luggage to the Hotel de Paris," he said to my servant; and at the same time he passed to his room, where he finished dressing himself. When he re-appeared, I went to meet him.

"You promise me, my father," I said to him, "to do nothing that will cause pain to Marguerite?"

My father stopped, looked at me with disdain, and merely replied,—

"You are mad, I think."

After which, he went out, pulling the door violently as he retired. I then descended in my turn, took a cab and departed for Bougival. Marguerite was awaiting my arrival at the window.

CHAPTER XXI.

"At length!" she cried, as she clung round my neck. "You are come! But how pale you are!"

I then recounted to her the scene with my father.

"Ah! I suspected as much," she said. "When Joseph announced to us the arrival of your father, I trembled as at the news of some misfortune. Poor friend! and it is I who cause you all these griefs. You will perhaps do better to quit me than to quarrel with your father. Still, I have done him no harm. We live very quietly; we will live still more so. He knows well enough you must have a mistress, and he ought to be glad that it is me, since I love you, and look no higher than your position permits you. Did you tell him how we had arranged the future?"

"Yes, and it is that which has the most enraged him, for in this determination he saw the proof of our mutual love."

"What is to be done, then?"

"Remain together, my good Marguerite, and let the storm pass over."

"But will it pass?"

"It must."

"But your father will not stop here."

"What do you suppose he will do?"

"How do I know? All that a father can do to make his son obey him. He will remind you of my past life, and will do me perhaps the honour to invent some new history of me, to make you abandon me."

"You know well that I love you?"

"Yes, but what I also know is, that you must sooner or later obey your father, and you will finish perhaps by allowing him to convince you."

"No, Marguerite, it is I who will convince him. It is the meddling of some of his friends that causes this great anger; but he is good, he is just, and his first impression will give way. Besides, after all, what matters it to me?"

"Don't say that, Armand; I should prefer anything to its being thought that I had embroiled you with your father. Let to-day pass, and to-morrow return to Paris. Your father will have reflected on his side as you on yours, and perhaps you will come to a better understanding. Do not shock his principles, appear to make some concessions to his wishes, and not to think so much of me, and he will leave things as they are. Hope, my friend, and be quite certain that happen what will, your Marguerite will remain true to you."

"You swear it?"

"Have I need to swear it?"

How sweet it is to allow one's-self to be re-assured by a voice which one loves! Marguerite and I passed the whole day in arranging our projects as if we saw the necessity of realising them at once. Every moment we looked for some

event, but happily the day passed without bringing anything new. The next day I started at ten o'clock, and about twelve arrived at the hotel.

My father had already gone out. I went to my rooms, where I hoped to find him. No one had called. I went to my lawyer's. No one!

I returned to the hotel, and waited until six o'clock. M. Duval did not return.

I started back to Bougival. I found Marguerite, not awaiting me as usual, but seated in the chimney corner, the weather being now cold. She was so plunged in her reflections that she allowed me to approach her chair without hearing me, or turning round. When I kissed her forehead, she started as if the kiss had suddenly awakened her.

"You frightened me," she said. "And your father?"

"I have not seen him. I know not what it means. I found him neither at his hotel nor at any of the places he usually frequents."

"Well, we must begin again to-morrow."

"I have a great mind to wait till he sends for me. I think I have done all I ought to do."

"No, my friend, it is not enough; you must return to your father—to-morrow especially."

"Why to-morrow, more than any other day?"

"Because," said Marguerite, who appeared to colour a little at the question, "because this perseverance on your part will appear more sincere, and our pardon will result more promptly."

All the rest of the day, Marguerite was pre-occupied, abstracted, gloomy. I was obliged to repeat twice what I had to say to her before I could get a reply. She attributed this pre-occupation to the fears inspired in her by the events of the last two days.

I passed the night in re-assuring her, but she made me depart the next morning in such a state of dejectedness that I could not account for it.

As yesterday, my father was absent; but on going out, he had left this letter for me:—

"If you return to see me to-day, wait for me till four

o'clock; if at four o'clock I have not returned, come to-morrow and dine with me; I must speak to you."

I waited till four; my father did not make his appearance. I departed.

Yesterday I had found Marguerite sad; to-day I found her feverish and agitated. On seeing me enter, she flung herself round my neck, and wept for some time in my arms. I questioned her as to this sudden grief, the increase of which alarmed me. She gave me no positive reason, but contented herself with alleging all that a woman can invent when she does not wish to answer truly.

When she became somewhat calmed, I recounted to her the results of my journey; I showed her my father's letter, remarking to her that we might augur well from it. At the sight of this letter, and at the reflection I made upon it, her tears redoubled to such a degree that I called Nanine, and fearing a nervous attack, we carried the poor girl to bed; she cried without speaking a word, but held me by my hands, and kissed them every moment. I asked Nanine if during my absence her mistress had received any letter or visit that could account for the state I found her in, but Nanine replied that no one had called and no letter had come.

Still, since yesterday, something unpleasant had taken place, which Marguerite concealed from me.

She appeared a little more calm in the evening, and making me sit on the side of her bed, she renewed to me the assurance of her love. She then smiled on me, but with an effort, for in spite of herself her eyes filled with tears. I employed every means to induce her to avow the real cause of this grief, but she persisted in giving me the vague reasons I have already mentioned.

She finished by falling asleep in my arms, but it was a sleep that exhausts the body instead of recruiting it; occasionally she uttered a cry, suddenly awoke, and after assuring herself that I was near her, she made me swear to love her always.

I could comprehend nothing of this intermittent grief, which was prolonged till morning. She then fell into a kind of doze. For two nights she had not slept.

This repose was not of long continuance. About eleven o'clock Marguerite awoke, and seeing me up, she looked round her, exclaiming,

"Are you going already, then?"

"No," I said, taking her hands, "but I wished to let you sleep. It is early yet."

"At what hour are you going to Paris?"

"At four o'clock."

"So soon? Until then remain with me, will you?"

"Undoubtedly; is it not my custom?"

"What happiness? We will go to breakfast?" she continued, with an absent manner.

"If you like it."

"And you will kiss me till the moment of going?"

"Yes, and I will return as soon as possible."

"You will return?" she said, looking at me with haggard eyes.

"Of course."

"Very true; you will return to-night, and I shall await you as usual, and you will love me, and we shall be as happy as we have been since we knew each other."

Every word of this was spoken in so hollow a tone, that it seemed to conceal some painful idea, and I trembled, every moment expecting to see Marguerite fall into a state of delirium.

"Listen," I said to her; "you are ill, I cannot leave you thus. I will write to my father for him not to expect me."

"No! no!" she suddenly exclaimed. "Don't do that. Your father will again accuse me of preventing your coming to him when he wishes to see you; no, no, you must go. Besides, I am not ill; I am very well. I have had an unpleasant dream, and was not half awake!"

From this moment Marguerite tried to appear more cheerful. She wept no longer.

When the hour approached for me to go, I embraced her, and asked her if she would accompany me to the railway station; I hoped that the walk would cheer her, and the air do her good. Besides, I wished to remain with her as long as possible. She accepted my offer, put on a cloak

and accompanied me with Nanine that she might not return alone.

Twenty times I was on the point of not going. But the hope of returning soon, and the fear of once more disposing my father against me, supported me, and the train carried me away.

"To-night," I said to Marguerite on quitting her. She made me no reply.

Once before she had given me no reply to the same words; and the Count de G——, you remember, had passed the night with her; but that time was so far back, that it seemed effaced from my memory, and if I feared anything, it certainly was not that Marguerite would deceive me.

On arriving at Paris, I hastened to Prudence, to beg her to go and see Marguerite, hoping that her chat and gaiety would amuse her. I entered without being announced, and found Prudence at her toilette.

"Ah!" she said to me with some uneasiness, "is Marguerite with you?"

"No."

"How is she?"

"She is suffering."

"Is she not coming?"

"Ought she to come?"

Madame Duvernoy blushed, and replied, with some embarrassment,

"I meant, since you are come to Paris, will she not rejoin you here?"

"No."

I looked at Prudence; she bent down her eyes, and in her physiognomy I thought I read the fear of seeing my visit prolonged.

"I am even come, my dear Prudence, to beg you, if you have nothing to do, to go and see Marguerite to-night; you will be company for her and you can sleep there. I never saw her as she was to-day, and I fear she will be ill."

"I dine in town," replied Prudence, "and I cannot see Marguerite to-night; but I will see her to-morrow."

I took leave of Madame Duvernoy, who appeared to me almost as much pre-occupied as Marguerite, and I repaired to my father, whose first glance regarded me with attention. He tendered me his hand.

"Your two visits have pleased me, Armand," he said; "they have made me hope, that you have also reflected as I have reflected."

"May I be allowed to ask you, my father, what has been the result of your reflections?"

"It has been, my son, that I exaggerated the importance of the reports that were made to me, and that I have promised myself to be less severe towards you."

"What do you say? my kind father!" I exclaimed with joy.

"I say, my dear child, that every young man must have a mistress, and that, from fresh information, I would rather you were the lover of Mademoiselle Gautier than of any other."

"My excellent father! how happy you make me."

We conversed thus for some moments, and then sat down to dinner. My father was charming the whole of dinner time. I was in a hurry to return to Bougival to recount to Marguerite this happy change. I looked at the clock every moment.

"You are regarding the hour," said my father. "You are impatient to quit me. Oh! young men! You will always sacrifice sincere affections to doubtful ones!"

"Do not say that, my father! Marguerite loves me; I am sure of it."

My father made no reply; he appeared neither to doubt nor to believe.

He strongly insisted on my passing the entire evening with him, and that I should not return till the next morning; but I had left Marguerite suffering, I said to him; and I asked his permission to return to her early, promising to come back the next day. The weather was fine, he would accompany me to the station. Never had I been so happy. The future appeared to me such as I had long wished to behold it. I loved my father more than I had

ever done. At the moment I was about to leave, he again begged me to remain; I refused.

"You love her sincerely then?" he asked me.

"Madly."

"Go, then!" and he drew his hand across his forehead as if to drive away a thought; he then opened his lips as if about to say something, but he only pressed my hand and quitted me abruptly, saying,

"To-morrow, then."

CHAPTER XXII.

To me it seemed that the train did not move. I was at Bougival at eleven o'clock. Not a window of the house had a light, and I rang without receiving any reply. I was the first time that such a thing had happened to me. At length the gardener appeared. I entered. Nanine joined me with a light.

I arrived at Marguerite's chamber.

"Where is Madame?"

"Madame is gone to Paris," replied Nanine.

"To Paris?"

"Yes, Sir."

"When?"

"Just one hour after you."

"She has left with you nothing for me?"

"Nothing."

"'Tis strange! Did she say that any one expected her?"

"No."

Nanine left me.

"It is possible she might have had some fears," I thought, "and is gone to Paris to assure herself if the visit I told her I was to make to my father was not a pretence to obtain a day's liberty."

"Perhaps Prudence has written her on some important

affair," I said to myself when alone; but I had seen Prudence on my arrival, and she had said nothing to me that could induce me to think she had written to Marguerite.

Suddenly I remembered the question Madame Duvernoy had asked me, "She will not come to-day, then?" when I had mentioned that Marguerite was ill. I remembered at the same time the embarrassed air of Prudence, when I looked at her after this sentence, which seemed to betray an appointment. To this remembrance was joined that of Marguerite's tears during the whole day, tears which the kind reception of my father had made me forget somewhat.

From this moment all the incidents of the day collected round my first suspicion, and fixed it so firmly in my mind that everything, even to the paternal clemency, confirmed it.

Marguerite had almost exacted that I should go to Paris; she had affected calmness when I proposed to remain with her. Had I fallen into a trap? Had Marguerite deceived me? Had she reckoned on returning in time for me not to notice her absence, and had chance delayed her? Why had she said nothing to Nanine, or why had she not written to me? What meant those tears, this absence, this mystery?

This is what I asked myself with fear, in the midst of that empty chamber, and with my eyes fixed on the time-piece, which, marking midnight, seemed to tell me it was too late for me to hope to see my mistress return.

Nevertheless, after the arrangements we had made, after the sacrifice offered and accepted, was it likely she had deceived me? No. I endeavoured to discard my first suppositions.

"The poor girl has found a purchaser for her furniture, and is gone to Paris to conclude it. She would not apprise me, for she knew that, although I accept this sale as necessary to our future happiness, still it is painful to me, and she was afraid of wounding my pride and my delicacy by speaking of it. She prefers re-appearing only when all is concluded. Prudence evidently expected her for that, and betrayed herself before me. Marguerite could not conclude her bar-

gain to-day, and therefore sleeps with her, or she may even arrive presently, for she must fancy my uneasiness, and and would certainly not leave me in it.

"But then, why those tears? No doubt, in spite of her love for me, the poor girl could not resolve without tears to abandon the luxury amidst which she has hitherto lived, and which made her happy and envied."

I willingly pardoned Marguerite these regrets. I awaited her impatiently to say to her, while covering her with kisses, that I had divined the cause of her mysterious absence. Still the night wore away, and Marguerite did not arrive.

Alarm drew closer its circle by degrees, and increased the fever of my head and heart. Perhaps something had happened to her? Perhaps she was wounded, ill, dead? Perhaps I should see a messenger arrive, announcing to me some grievous accident? Perhaps the daylight would find me in the same uncertainty and possessed with the same fears?

The idea that Marguerite was deceiving me at the very moment I was expecting her amidst the terrors roused by her absence, no longer worried me. It required some cause independent of her will to detain her from me; and the more I thought of it, the more I was convinced that the cause could be nothing else than some unforeseen accident. Oh, vanity of man! thou exhibitest thyself under every form!

One o'clock struck. I said to myself I would wait another hour, but that at two o'clock, if Marguerite had not returned, I would start for Paris.

In the meantime, I took up a book, for I dared not think. *Manon Lescaut* lay open on the table. It seemed to me that in different places the pages were moist, as if with tears. After turning over the leaves, I closed the book, its characters appearing to me void of sense through the veil of my doubts.

Time wore slowly on. The sky was overcast. An autumn rain pelted against the windows. The empty bed seemed to me at times to take the aspect of a tomb. A fear seized upon me. I opened the door, listened, and

heard nothing but the sound of the wind through the trees. Not a vehicle passed along the road. The half-hour struck mournfully from the church clock.

At length I actually feared that some one would enter. I fancied that only the news of some accident could reach me at this hour and this dreary time.

Two o'clock struck. I still waited a little. The pendulum of the time-piece alone disturbed the silence with its regular and monotonous click! click!

At length I quitted the chamber, whose smallest objects had assumed that sad aspect which the gloomy dreariness of the heart confers on all surrounding things.

In the adjoining room I found Nanine asleep over her work. At the opening of the door she awoke, and inquired if her mistress had returned.

"No; but if she should return, you will tell her that I could not resist my uneasiness, and that I am gone to Paris."

"At this hour?"

"Yes."

"But how? You will not find a coach."

"I will go on foot."

"But it rains."

"What matter?"

"Madame will return, or if she does not return, it will still be time at daylight to go out and see what has detained her. You will be murdered on the road."

"There is no danger, my dear Nanine. Adieu till to-morrow."

The worthy girl went for my cloak, threw it over my shoulders, offered to go and wake Mother Arnold, and to inquire if it was not possible to obtain a coach; but I opposed it, convinced that I should lose in this perhaps useless attempt more time than half the journey would occupy. Besides, I required air and bodily fatigue to overcome the excitement to which I was a prey.

I took the key of the apartment of the Rue d'Antin, and after bidding farewell to Nanine, who accompanied me to the gate, I departed.

At first I ran, but the ground was newly moistened, and it doubly fatigued me. After about half an hour at this pace, I was forced to stop ; I was in a sweat. I took breath and continued my journey. The darkness was so complete, that I trembled every moment lest I should run against one of the trees by the roadside, and which, presenting themselves suddenly to my eyes, had the appearance of tall phantoms advancing against me.

I overtook one or two carriers' carts, which I soon left behind me. A carriage was on its way at a smart trot towards Bougival. At the moment it passed me, the hope seized me that Marguerite was inside of it. I stopped, crying out, "Marguerite! Marguerite!" But no one replied, and the carriage pursued its route. I looked after it till it disappeared, and then resumed my journey. It took me two hours to reach the Barrier de l'Etoile.

The sight of Paris restored my strength, and I ran down the long alley that I had so frequently passed through before.

On this night, no one was passing. It seemed like the promenade of a dead city. Daylight was just making its appearance, when I arrived at the Rue d'Antin. The great metropolis was already a little astir, before wholly rising to the duties of the day.

Five o'clock struck from the clock of St. Roch, at the moment I entered Marguerite's house. I gave my name to the porter, who had received from me gold pieces enough to know that I had a sufficient right to come to Mademoiselle Gautier's at five o'clock in the morning.

I therefore passed without obstacle.

I might have asked him if Marguerite was at home, but he might have replied to me "No!" and I preferred doubting two minutes longer, for in doubting I still hoped.

I ascended. I listened at the door, endeavouring to catch a sound, a movement. Nothing. The silence of the country seemed to be continued here.

I opened the door, and entered. Every curtain was hermetically closed. I drew those of the dining-room, and turned towards the bed-room, the door of which I pushed

open. I sprang to the cord of the window curtains, and pulled it violently. The curtains separated; a faint light entered: I ran to the bed. It was empty!

I opened the doors one after another; I searched every room. No one. It nearly drove me mad. I passed into the dressing-room the window of which I opened, and called Prudence several times. The window of Madame Duvernoy's room was closed.

I then descended to the porter, of whom I inquired if Mademoiselle Gautier had been to her rooms during the day.

"Yes," he replied, "with Madame Duvernoy."

"Did she leave any message for me?"

"Nothing."

"Do you know what they did afterwards?"

"They entered a coach."

"What sort of a coach?"

"A hired one."

What did all this mean? I knocked at the next door.

"Where are you going, sir?" inquired the porter after letting me in.

"To Madame Duvernoy."

"She has not returned."

"You are sure of it?"

"Yes, sir; indeed here is a letter brought for her yesterday evening, and which I have not yet delivered;" and the porter showed me a letter on which I mechanically cast my eyes. I recognised Marguerite's handwriting. I took the letter. The address bore these words:—

"To Madame Duvernoy, to be delivered to M. Duval."

"This letter is for me," I said to the porter, and I showed him the address.

"Are you Monsieur Duval?" he inquired.

"Yes."

"Ah! I recognise you; you often came to Madame Duvernoy's."

Once in the street, I broke the seal of the letter.

Had a thunderbolt fallen at my feet, I should not have been more petrified than I was at its contents:—

"When you read this letter, Armand, I shall already

be the mistress of another. All is therefore at an end between us.

"Return to your father, my friend; go and see your sister, a young girl, chaste, ignorant of all our miseries, and in whose society you will soon forget what you have been made to suffer by that lost girl, named Marguerite Gautier, whom you fondly loved for a moment, and who is indebted to you for the few happy hours of a life, which she hopes will not now be a long one."

When I read the last words, I thought my brain would burst. For a moment, I really felt as if I should fall to the ground. A cloud overspread my eyes, and my blood beat against my temples.

At length I recovered a little; I looked around me, quite astonished to see that the world still moved on, in spite of my intense affliction.

I was not strong enough to support alone the blow which Marguerite had dealt me.

I then remembered that my father was in the same city as myself, that in ten minutes I could be with him, and that whatever was the cause of my grief, he would comfort me.

I ran like a madman, like a thief, to the Hotel de Paris; I found the key in the door of my father's apartment. I entered.

He was reading.

From the little astonishment he showed on seeing me, one would have said he expected me.

I threw myself into his arms without saying a word to him. I gave him Marguerite's letter, and falling on his bed, I wept abundantly.

CHAPTER XXIII.

When all things had resumed their course, I could not believe that the day now rising would not be similar, for

me, to those that had preceded it. There were moments when I fancied that a circumstance which I no longer remembered, had made me pass the night away from Marguerite, but that if I returned to Bougival, I should find her uneasy as I had been, and that she would demand of me what had kept me away from her.

When life has contracted a habit like that of love, it seems impossible that this habit can break without destroying at the same time all the other roots of life. I was therefore forced from time to time, to read over Marguerite's letter, to convince myself that it was not a dream.

My body, giving way beneath the moral shock, was incapable of movement. Wretchedness, the night's journey and the morning's news, had exhausted me. My father profited by this total prostration of my strength to demand from me a formal promise to depart with him.

I promised all he wished. I was incapable of supporting any discussion, and I required a real affection to enable me to live after what had taken place.

I was only too happy in thinking that my father kindly consoled me in my great grief.

All that I recollect is that, on this day, about five o'clock, he seated me beside him in a post-chaise. Without saying anything to me, he had my trunk packed, had it strapped with his own behind the carriage, and took me away.

I know not what I did until the town had disappeared, and the solitude of the road recalled to me the void of my heart.

Then tears came to my relief.

My father had comprehended that words, even from him, would not console me, and he allowed me to weep without a syllable, contenting himself at times with pressing my hands, as if to remind me that I had a friend at my side.

At night I slept a little. I dreamt of Marguerite. I suddenly awoke, not comprehending why I was in a carriage. Then reality returned to my mind, and

I bowed my head on my breast. I dared not converse with my father, still fearing that he might say to me,

"You see that I was right when I denied the love of this woman."

But he did not abuse his position, and we arrived at C—— without his making the slightest allusion to the event which had compelled my departure.

When I embraced my sister, I remembered the words of Marguerite that referred to her, but I soon felt that, good as she was, my sister would be insufficient to make me forget my mistress.

The shooting season was still open; my father thought that this would be some distraction for me. He therefore arranged some shooting parties with friends and neighbours. I attended them without repugnance as without enthusiasm, with that sort of apathy which characterised all my actions since my departure.

We shot as we liked. I was placed at my post. I laid my unloaded gun against a tree, and dreamt. I looked at the clouds as they passed. I allowed my thoughts to wander over the solitary plains, and occasionally heard myself called by some sportsman who would point to a hare within a dozen paces of me.

None of these details escaped my father, who did not allow himself to be deceived by my apparent calmness. He well understood that, prostrated as I was, my heart would some day have a terrible, perhaps dangerous re-action, and whilst he avoided consoling me, he did his utmost to amuse me.

My sister, naturally, was not acquainted with what had transpired; she could not, therefore, comprehend why her brother, formerly so gay, had so suddenly become thoughtful and sad.

At times, surprised in the midst of my sorrow by the uneasy regard of my father, I tendered him my hand and pressed his, as if tacitly to demand of him pardon for the injury which, in spite of myself, I had done to him.

A month thus passed, but this was all I could support. The remembrance of Marguerite constantly pursued me. I

had too deeply loved this woman for her to become suddenly indifferent to me. I found that I must either love her or hate her. And above all, I found that however I felt towards her, I must see her once more, and that soon.

This desire entered my mind, and fixed itself there with all the violence of a will that had at length re-appeared in my listless frame for some time past.

It was not on some future day, in a month, in a week, that I felt I must see Marguerite, it was on the very morning after the day on which the idea had occurred to me ; and I told my father that I was about to quit him on some business that called me to Paris, but that I would speedily return.

Of course, he guessed the motive for my leaving, for he insisted that I should remain ; but seeing that the non-execution of this desire, under the irritable state I was in, might produce consequences fatal to me, he embraced me, and begged me, with tears in his eyes, to speedily rejoin him.

I did not sleep until I arrived in Paris. Once there, what was I to do? I knew not ; but before anything I must think of Marguerite.

I went to my rooms to dress, and as the weather was fine, and there was still time, I repaired to the Champs Elysées.

In about half an hour, I saw approaching in the distance, and from the round point at the Place de la Concorde, Marguerite's carriage. She had re-purchased her horses, for the carriage was in all respects the same as formerly, but she was not inside.

Scarcely had I remarked this absence, when in casting my eyes round me, I saw Marguerite, who had dismounted, walking with a female whom I had never seen before.

On passing close to me she turned pale, and a nervous smile parted her lips. As for me, a violent beating of the heart shook my bosom, but I contrived to give a cold expression to my face, and as coldly saluted my ancient mistress, who almost immediately rejoined her carriage, into which she entered with her friend.

I knew Marguerite. Our sudden meeting must have

confounded her. No doubt she had heard of my departure, which had tranquillised her as to the consequences of our rupture; but, seeing me returned, and finding herself face to face with me, pale as I was, she had conjectured that my return had an object, and she would ask herself what was about to take place.

If I had found Marguerite unhappy; if, to revenge myself of her, I could have come to her relief, I should perhaps have pardoned her, and certainly should never have thought of injuring her; but I found her happy, in appearance at least; another had bestowed on her the luxury I could no longer continue. Our rupture, caused by herself, consequently took the character of the lowest self-interest. I was humbled in my pride as in my love; she must necessarily pay for what I had suffered.

I could not be indifferent to what this woman did; consequently, that which would annoy her the most was my indifference; it was, therefore, this sentiment which I must feign, not only to her eyes, but to those of others.

I endeavoured to assume a smiling face, and repaired to Prudence's rooms. The *femme de chambre* went to announce me, and made me wait a few minutes in the saloon.

Madame Duvernoy at length appeared, and introduced me into the boudoir; at the moment I was taking a seat, I heard the door of the saloon open, and a light step creak on the floor, then the door of the landing was violently shut.

"I disturb you?" I said to Prudence.

"Not at all; Marguerite was here. When she heard you announced, she fled; 'tis she who has just gone out."

"I frighten her then, now?"

"No, but she fears it would be disagreeable to you to see her."

"Why so?" I said, making an effort to breathe freely, for my emotion choked me; "the poor girl quitted me to have her carriage again, her furniture, and her diamonds: she has done right, and I ought not to be angry with her. I encountered her to-day," I observed carelessly.

"Where?" said Prudence, who regarded me and appeared to ask herself if this was really the man who had been so deeply in love.

"In the Champs Elysées. She was with another very pretty woman; who is that woman?"

"What was her appearance and dress?"

"A blonde, thin, and wears ringlets; blue eyes, and dressed elegantly."

"Ah! 'tis Olympia; a very pretty girl, in fact."

"With whom does she live?"

"With no one, with every one."

"And she resides?"

"Rue Tronchet, No. —. Ah! I see, you would pay your court to her?"

"One doesn't know what may happen."

"And Marguerite?"

"To tell you that I no longer think of her, would be a lie; but I am one of those men with whom the mode of breaking goes a great way. Now, Marguerite gave me my dismissal in such a light sort of fashion, that I have thought myself a very great fool for having been so smitten with her as I had been, for I was really quite in love with the girl."

You can imagine in what a tone I endeavoured to speak these words; the perspiration rolled down my face.

"She loved you too, and she loves you still; as a proof, after she met you to-day, she came to me directly to tell me of her encounter. When she arrived she was quite out of breath, and almost ill."

"Well! what did she say to you?"

"She said, no doubt he will come and see you, and she begged me to implore your pardon for her."

"I have pardoned her; you can tell her so. She is a good girl, but she is still a girl; and what she has done to me is just what I might have expected. I am even grateful to her for her resolution, for to-day I ask myself to what my idea of living entirely with her would have led us. It was sheer folly."

"She will be more contented on learning that you have made up your mind as to the necessity in which she found herself. It was time she quitted you, my friend. The scamp of a man to whom she had proposed to sell her furniture, had been round to her creditors to ascertain how much she owed them; the latter became fearful, and they were about to sell in two days' time."

"And now, it is all paid?"

"Nearly."

"And who found the cash?"

"The Count de N——. Ah! my dear! there are men made expressly for that. To be brief, he gave 20,000 francs; but he achieved his object. He knows well that Marguerite is not in love with him, but *that* does not prevent him acting the genteel towards her. You have seen, he has repurchased her horses, he has redeemed her diamonds, and gives her as much money as the Duke gave her; if she will live quietly, this man will remain a long time with her."

"And what is she doing? does she reside entirely at Paris?"

"She would never return to Bougival after you left it. It was I who went there for her things, and yours too, of which I have made a parcel which you will find here. There is everything except a small portfolio with your cipher. Marguerite would take it, and has it with her. If you wish it, I will ask her for it."

"Let her keep it," I stammered, for I felt the tears mount from my heart to my eyes at the remembrance of the village where I had been so happy, and at the idea that Marguerite resolved to keep an object that belonged to me and reminded her of me. If she had entered at this moment, my resolutions of vengeance would have disappeared and I should have fallen at her feet.

"For the rest," resumed Prudence, "I have never seen her as she is at present; she scarcely sleeps at all, she attends balls and suppers, and even drinks to excess. Lately, after a supper, she remained nearly a whole week in bed,

and when the physician allowed her to get up, she recommenced her old course, at the risk of killing herself. Will you go and see her?"

"Where's the use? I am come to see you, because you were agreeable towards me, and because I knew you before I knew Marguerite. It is to you I am indebted for having been her lover, as it is to you I am indebted for being so no longer; is it not so?"

"Ah! faith, I did all I could to make her quit you, and I think that in the end you will not blame me for it."

"I am doubly grateful to you," I added rising, for I felt a disgust towards this woman on seeing her take so seriously all that I had said to her.

"Are you going?"

"Yes. I know quite enough."

"When shall I see you again?"

"Soon. Adieu."

"Adieu."

Prudence conducted me to the door, and I returned to my rooms with tears of rage in my eyes and a cry of vengeance in my heart.

Thus Marguerite was decidedly a girl like the others; thus, this deep love she had pretended for me could not struggle against the desire of resuming her past life, and the need she felt of having a carriage and of pursuing her orgies.

Such were my thoughts whilst passing sleepless nights, whereas had I reflected as coldly as I affected to do, I should have seen in this new and noisy existence of Marguerite, a hope within her of silencing a continuous thought, an incessant remembrance.

Unfortunately, evil passion predominated in me, and I now only sought a means of torturing this poor creature.

Oh! man is very little, and very vile, when one of his evil passions is wounded.

This Olympia, with whom I had seen her, was, if not the friend of Marguerite, at any rate the one she most associated with since her return to Paris. She was about to give a ball, and as I supposed that Marguerite would be there, I endeavoured to get an invitation, and succeeded.

When, full of painful emotions, I arrived at this ball, it was already very animated. They danced, they sang, and in one of the quadrilles I perceived Marguerite dancing with the Count de N——, who appeared quite proud of exhibiting her, and seemed to say to every one,

"This woman is mine."

I stood with my back to the fire-place, just opposite Marguerite, and regarded her as she danced. Scarcely had she remarked me, when she became troubled. I saw her and saluted her carelessly with my hand and eyes.

When I thought that, after the ball, it would no longer be with me, but with the rich imbecile, that she would depart—when I fancied what would most likely follow their return to her home, the blood mounted to my face, and I felt a longing to disturb their loves.

After the country dance, I proceeded to offer my salutations to the mistress of the house, who displayed to the eyes of her guests a pair of magnificent shoulders and the moiety of a ravishing bosom.

This girl was beautiful, and with respect to shape, more so than Marguerite. I discovered this still more from certain looks which the latter cast at Olympia whilst I conversed with her. The man who should be the lover of this woman, might be as proud as was M. de N——, and she was beautiful enough to inspire a passion equal to that which Marguerite had inspired in me.

At this period she had no lover. It would not be difficult to fill this place. The only thing was to display gold enough to make one's-self remarked.

My resolution was taken This woman should be my mistress. I commenced my *rôle* of a postulant in dancing with Olympia. Half an hour after, Marguerite, pale as death, put on her cloak and quitted the ball-room.

CHAPTER XXIV.

This was already something, but it was not enough. I felt the power I had over this woman, and I basely took advantage of it. When I reflect that she is now dead, I ask myself if God will ever pardon me the injury which I caused her.

After supper, which was a very noisy one, cards were introduced. I seated myself by the side of Olympia, and staked my money with such rashness, that she could not help paying attention to it. In a few minutes I won a hundred or a hundred and fifty louis, which I displayed before me, and on which she fixed her devouring eyes.

I was the only one not solely pre-occupied with the play and who studied her. Through the whole night I continued to win, and it was I who gave her money to play with, for she had lost all she had before her, and probably all she possessed.

At five o'clock in the morning the party broke up. I had won 300 louis.

All the players were already below; I alone remained behind, without being noticed, for I was not the friend of any of the company. Olympia herself lighted the staircase, and I was about to descend like the others, when turning towards her, I said,

"I must speak to you."

"To-morrow," she said.

"No, now."

"What have you to say to me?"

"You shall hear." And I re-entered the apartment.

"You have lost?" I said to her.

"Yes."

"All you had in the house?" She hesitated.

"Come, be frank?"

"Well, it's true."

"I have won 300 louis; they are yours, if you will keep me here."

And at the same time I threw the gold on the table.

"And why this proposition?"

"Because I love you, by God!"

"No, but because you are in love with Marguerite, and you wish to revenge yourself upon her by becoming my lover. You cannot deceive a woman like me, my dear friend; unfortunately, I am still too young and too pretty for it to be necessary for me to accept the part you propose to me."

"And so, you refuse?"

"Yes."

"Would you prefer to love me for nothing? In that case, I should not accept. Reflect, my dear Olympia; I might have sent some person to you to propose 300 louis on my part, ont he conditions I have mentioned, and you would have accepted. I have preferred treating directly with you. Accept, without seeking for the causes that induce me thus to act; think that you are beautiful, and that there is nothing astonishing in my being in love with you."

Marguerite was a courtesan like Olympia, and yet I should never have dared to say to her the first time I saw her what I had said to this woman. For I had loved Marguerite, I had discovered in her instincts entirely wanting in this creature, and at the very moment in which I proposed these terms, despite her extreme beauty, she with whom I was about to conclude the bargain disgusted me.

She finished, of course, by accepting, and by twelve the next day I issued from her apartments as her lover; but I quitted her bed without carrying away with me the remembrance of the caresses and words of love she had thought herself obliged to bestow on me for the 6,000 francs I had left her.

And yet there were men who ruined themselves for this woman!

From this day I subjected Marguerite to one continued persecution. She and Olympia ceased their intimacy,—you can imagine why. I gave my new mistress a carriage and jewels · I gambled: in fact, I committed all the follies

suited to a man amorous of a woman like Olympia. The noise of my new passion soon spread about.

Prudence herself was caught by it, and finished by thinking that I had completely forgotten Marguerite. The latter, whether she had divined the motive that urged me to act thus, or whether she was deceived like the others, replied by a grand dignity to the wounds I gave her daily; nevertheless she appeared to suffer, for whenever I met her, I always found her paler and paler, sadder and sadder. My love for her, exalted to that degree that it seemed turned to hatred, rejoiced at the sight of this continued grief. Frequently, under circumstances in which I displayed infamous cruelty, Marguerite raised towards me looks so supplicating that I blushed at the part I had taken, and was ready to demand her pardon for it.

But these repentances had the duration of lightning only, and Olympia, who had finished by throwing aside all appearance of respect, and felt that by injuring Marguerite she would obtain from me all she wished, constantly excited me against her, and insulted her every time she found an opportunity, with that obstinate baseness of a woman when encouraged by a man.

Marguerite at length no longer went to a ball or theatre, from the fear of meeting Olympia and me. Then, anonymous letters succeeded to direct impertinencies, and there was not a disgraceful thing I did not engage my mistress to recount, and which I did not recount myself, of Marguerite.

I must have been mad to have arrived at this. I was like a man who, having got drunk on bad wine, falls into one of those nervous excitements in which the hand is capable of a crime, without the brain having anything to do with it. In the midst of all this, I suffered martyrdom. The calmness without disdain, the dignity without contempt, with which Marguerite replied to all my attacks, and which to my own eyes made her so superior to me, irritated me still more against her.

One evening Olympia had gone I know not where, and had met with Marguerite, who this time had not humbled

to the foolish girl who insulted her, so that the latter was forced to yield her place. Olympia had returned furious, and Marguerite had been carried away in a swoon.

On entering, Olympia narrated what had taken place; she told me that Marguerite, seeing her alone, had resolved to avenge herself for her being my mistress, and that I must write to her to respect, whether I was present or not, the woman I loved.

I need not tell you that I consented, and that all I could think of that was base and cruel I included in this epistle, which I forwarded the same day to its address.

This time I felt certain the blow was too strong for the unhappy girl to support without saying anything.

I fully expected an answer to arrive, and therefore resolved not to stir out the whole day. About two o'clock the bell rang, and I saw Prudence enter.

I endeavoured to assume an indifferent air whilst inquiring to what I was indebted for her visit; but on this day Madame Duvernoy was not in a bantering mood, and in a tone seriously alarmed she told me that since my return—namely, for three weeks nearly—I had never allowed one opportunity to escape of paining Marguerite; that she was ill from it, and that yesterday's scene and my letter of this morning had driven her to bed. To be brief, without making me any reproaches, Marguerite sent to me to ask for a cessation, informing me that she had neither moral nor physical strength to support my conduct.

"For Mademoiselle Gautier to dismiss me," I said to Prudence, "that she had a perfect right to do; but that she should insult the woman I love, under pretence that this woman is my mistress, is what I will never permit."

"My friend," says Prudence, "you submit to the influence of a girl who has neither heart nor soul; you are amorous of her, it is true, but that is no reason why you should torture a woman who cannot defend herself."

"Let Mademoiselle Gautier send me her Count de N——, and the party will be equal."

"You well know she will not do so. Therefore, my dear Armand, leave her tranquil; if you could but see her, you

would be ashamed of the way in which you conduct yourself towards her. She is pale; she has a cough; she will not last long now."

And Prudence tendered me her hand, adding,

"Come and see her; your visit will make her very happy."

"I have no mind to encounter M. de N——."

"M. de N—— is never with her. She cannot bear it."

"If Marguerite is desirous of seeing me, she knows where I live; let her come, but as for me, I will never put my foot in the Rue d'Antin.

"And you will receive her kindly?"

"Quite so."

"Well, I am sure she will come."

"Let her come."

"Shall you go out to-day?"

"I shall be at home the whole evening."

"I will tell her so." And Prudence departed.

I did not even write to Olympia that I should not come to see her. I stood on no ceremony with this girl; I scarcely passed one night in the week with her. She consoled herself for this, I believe, with an actor of one of the Boulevard theatres.

I went out to dine, and returned almost immediately. I had fires lighted everywhere, and dismissed Joseph.

I could not render you an account of the different impressions that agitated me during a whole hour of waiting: but when about nine o'clock I heard the bell ring, they resolved themselves into one such emotion, that on going to open the door I was forced to lean against the wall to support myself. Luckily the ante-room was in partial obscurity, so that the change in my features was less visible. Marguerite entered. She was wholly in black, and veiled. I could scarcely recognise her face beneath the lace. She passed into the saloon, and lifted her veil. She was as pale as possible.

"I am come, Armand," she said; "you wished to see me,—I am here."

And, dropping her head on her two hands, she burst into tears. I approached her.

"What is the matter with you?" said I, in an agitated tone.

She pressed my hand without replying, for the tears still choked her voice. But a few moments after, having recovered a little calmness, she said to me,

"You have done me much injury, Armand, but I never did you any."

"None?" I replied, with a bitter smile.

"Nothing but what circumstances forced me to do."

I know not whether in the course of your life you have ever felt, or ever will feel, what I experienced at the sight of Marguerite. The last time she had visited me she had seated herself at the same spot she now occupied, but, since that period, she had become the mistress of another; other kisses than mine had pressed those lips to which, despite myself, mine were attracted; and yet I felt that I loved this woman as much, and perhaps more, than I had ever loved her. Still it was difficult for me to lead the conversation on to the subject of her visit. Marguerite, no doubt, comprehended this, for she resumed,

"I am come to weary you, Armand, because I have two things to ask of you—pardon for what I did yesterday to Mademoiselle Olympia, and a cessation of what you are perhaps prepared to continue still. Voluntarily or not, since your return, you have so wounded me that I shall be incapable of supporting a quarter of the emotions I have hitherto supported. You will have pity on me, will you not, and you will acknowledge that there are for a man of spirit nobler things to do than to revenge himself on a woman ill and grieved as I am? There, take my hand. I am in a fever; I have quitted my bed to ask of you, not your friendship, but your indifference."

I took the hand of Marguerite. It was burning, and the poor girl shivered beneath her velvet mantle. I rolled the chair on which she was seated close to the fire.

"And do you believe then that I did not suffer," I

replied, "the night when, after awaiting you in the country, I came to seek you at Paris, when I found only this letter which nearly drove me mad? How could you deceive me, Marguerite, I who loved you so?"

"Speak not of that, Armand; I am not come to speak of it. I wished to see you otherwise than as an enemy, nothing more, and I wished to press your hand once again. You have a mistress, young, pretty, whom you love, it is said; be happy with her and forget me."

"And you—you are happy, no doubt?"

"Do I look like a happy woman, Armand? Do not mock my grief; you who know better than any one its cause and extent."

"It only depended on yourself not to be unhappy, if, indeed, you are as you say."

"No, my friend, circumstances were stronger than my will. I obeyed, not my sentiments as a girl, as you seem to infer, but a serious necessity and reasons that you shall one day know, and which will make you pardon me."

"Why do you not tell me these reasons to-day?"

"Because they would not re-establish an impossible reconciliation between us; and would probably separate you from persons from whom you ought not to separate?"

"Who are these persons?"

"I cannot tell you now."

"Then you lie?"

Marguerite rose and went towards the door.

I could not witness this silent and expressive grief without being moved, when I compared to myself this pale and weeping woman to the little madcap who laughed at me at the Opéra Comique.

"You shall not go," I said, placing myself before the door.

"Why?"

"Because, in spite of what you have done to me, I still love you, and I will keep you here."

"To drive me away to-morrow, perhaps. No—'tis impossible. Our two destinies are separated—strive not to

re-unite them; you will despise me, perhaps, whereas now you can but hate me."

"No, Marguerite," I cried, feeling all my love and all my desires once more aroused at the conduct of this woman. "No, I will forget all, and we will be as happy as we had promised ourselves to be."

Marguerite shook her head in sign of doubt, but said,

"Am I not your slave—your dog? Do with me as you like—take me—I am yours."

And taking off her cloak and bonnet, she threw them on the sofa, and began to unfasten abruptly the corsage of her dress; for by one of those re-actions—now become so frequent—of her illness, the blood rushed from her heart of her head, and stifled her.

A dry, hard cough succeeded.

"Tell my coachman," she resumed, "to take back my carriage."

I went down myself to dismiss the servant.

When I returned, Marguerite was stretched before the fire, and her teeth chattered with cold.

I took her in my arms, undressed her without her making a movement, and carried her, cold as ice, to my bed. I then took a seat near her, and endeavoured to warm her with my caresses. She said not a word to me, but smiled.

Oh! this was a strange night. Marguerite's whole life seemed to have passed into the kisses with which she covered me, and I loved her so, that amidst the transports of my feverish passion, I asked myself if I should not kill her, that she might never belong to another.

A month of such love as this, of the body as of the heart, and one would become a corpse.

Daylight found us both awake.

Marguerite was livid. She spoke not a word. Big tears rolled, occasionally, from her eyes, and rested on her cheeks, brilliant as diamonds. Her listless arms opened at times to seize me, and fell exhausted on the bed.

For a moment I thought I could forget what had passed since my departure from Bougival, and I said to Marguerite, "Shall we go away, shall we quit Paris?"

"No, no," she said, almost with fear, "we should be too unhappy. I can no longer conduce to your happiness, but, as long as a breath remains to me, I will be the slave of your caprices. At whatever hour of the day or night you wish for me, come; I will be yours;—but do not unite your future with mine; you would be too miserable, and you would render me too wretched. I am still, for some time, a pretty girl—make the most of it, but ask me for nothing more."

When she had gone, I was overcome with the solitude to which she left me. Two hours after her departure, I was still seated on the bed she had quitted, contemplating the pillow that retained the impression of her form, and asking myself what would become of me between my love and my jealousy.

At five o'clock, without even knowing what I was about, I repaired to the Rue d'Antin. It was Nanine who opened to me.

"Madame cannot receive you," she said, with embarrassment.

"Why not?"

"Because the Count de N—— is here, and he has forbid me to allow any one to enter."

"Quite right," I stammered, "I had forgotten."

I returned home like a drunken man, and do you know what I did during the moment of delirous jealousy that sufficed for the execution of the base action I was about to commit? Do you know what I did? I said to myself that this woman sported with me; I represented her to myself, in her secret *tete-à-tete* with the Count, repeating the same words she had spoken to me during the night, and, taking a note of five hundred francs, I sent it to her with these words:—

"You left so hurriedly this morning that I forgot to pay you.

"I enclose the compliment for your company last night."

Then, when the letter had gone, I went out as if to escape from the instantaneous remorse of this act of infamy.

I went to Olympia's, whom I found trying on some

dresses, and who, when we were alone, sang some obscenities to distract me.

This girl was undoubtedly the type of the courtesan, without shame, without heart, without mind—for me at least, as perhaps some man had had the same dream with her, as I had had with respect to Marguerite.

She asked me for money; I gave it to her, and then, free to depart, I returned home.

Marguerite had not replied to me. It is useless to tell you in what agitation I passed the rest of the day. At half-past six, a messenger brought me an envelope containing my letter and five hundred franc note, without a word more.

"Who gave you this?" I said to the man.

"A lady who was leaving with her *femme de chambre* in the Boulogne mail, and who requested me not to bring it till the coach was out of the yard."

I hastened to Marguerite's.

"Madame departed for England at six o'clock this evening," replied the porter."

There was nothing to retain me longer at Paris, neither love nor hatred. I was exhausted by all these shocks. One of my friends was about to make a voyage to the East; I mentioned to my father my wish to accompany him—my father gave me the necessary introductions, and eight or ten days afterwards I embarked at Marseilles.

It was at Alexandria that I learnt from an attaché of the embassy, whom I had occasionally seen at Marguerite's, the illness of the poor girl.

I then wrote the letter to which she sent the reply you are aware of, and which I received at Toulon.

I started immediately, and you know the rest.

It now remains for you to read the few pages that Julie Duprat delivered to me, and which are the indispensable fulfilment of what I have narrated to you.

CHAPTER XXV.

Armand, fatigued with this long recital, interrupted by his tears, placed his two hands over his forehead, and closed his eyes, either to muse or to endeavour to sleep, after giving me the pages written by the hand of Marguerite.

A few moments after, a respiration rather more rapid, told me that Armand slept, but a sleep so light that the faintest sound drove it away.

What I read was as follows; it has been transcribed without adding or withdrawing a syllable.

To-day is the 15th of December. I have been suffering for the last three or four days. This morning, I took to my bed; the weather is gloomy, and I am sad; no one is near me. I think of you, Armand. And you, where are you at the hour I write these few lines? Far from Paris, very far, I am told, and perhaps you have already forgotten Marguerite. However, be happy, you to whom I am indebted for the only moments of joy during my whole life.

I could not resist the desire of giving you an explanation of my conduct, and I had written you a letter, but written by a girl like me, such a letter might be regarded as a lie, unless death should give it the sanction of its authority, and, instead of being a letter, it became a confession.

To day I am ill; I may die of this illness, for I always had a presentiment that I should die young. My mother died of consumption; and the manner in which I have lived hitherto, could but encourage the disease, the only inheritance she left me; but I will not die without enabling you to judge me rightly, if indeed, when you return, you still think of the poor girl you so loved before your departure.

The following were the contents of that letter, which it

will be a pleasure to me to write over again, to give myself fresh proofs of my justification :—

You remember, Armand, how the arrival of your father surprised us at Bougival, you remember the involuntary terror which that arrival caused me, and the scene that followed between you and him, and which you recounted to me in the evening.

The next day, whilst you were at Paris, and waited for your father, who did not return, a man introduced himself to me, and delivered me a letter from M. Duval.

That letter, which I enclose in this, begged me in the most serious terms to send you out of the way the next day under some excuse, and to receive your father; he wished to speak with me, and requested me particularly to say nothing to you of this step.

You know with what persistence I advised you on your return to go to Paris the next day.

You had departed about an hour when your father presented himself. I will spare you the impression his severe features caused me. Your father was imbued with the old theories, which assert that every courtesan is a being without heart, without reason, a species of machine to be bought with gold, always ready like machines of iron to wound the hand that offers it anything, and to destroy without pity, without discernment, the one who makes it live and act.

Your father had written me a very respectful letter seeking for my consent to see him; but he did not present himself precisely as he had written. There was sufficient hauteur, impertinence, and even threats in his first words, to urge me to remark to him that I was in my own house, and that I had no account to render him of my life but for the sincere affection I had for his son.

M. Duval calmed himself a little, but still said to me that he could not longer permit his son to ruin himself for me; that I was beautiful, it was true, but that beautiful as I was, I ought not to make use of my beauty to destroy the future of a young man by expenses such as those I incurred.

To this, you will agree with me, there was but one thing to reply, and this was, to exhibit the proofs that since I had been your mistress no sacrifice on my part had been too great in order to remain faithful to you without asking you for more money than you could give me. I showed him the pawnbroker's tickets, the receipts of the persons to whom I had sold the articles which I had been unable to pledge. I told your father of my resolution to part with my furniture to pay my debts, and to live with you without being too heavy a burden to you. I recounted to him our happiness, the revelation you had given me of a more tranquil and happy life, and he finished by yielding to the evidence, tendering me his hand, and asking my pardon for the manner in which he had first conducted himself.

He now said to me,

"Then, Madame, it is not by remonstrances and threats, but by prayers, I shall endeavour to obtain from you a sacrifice greater than all those you have hitherto made for my son."

I trembled at this preamble. Your father drew nearer to me, took both my hands, and continued in an affectionate tone,

"My child, do not take in bad part what I am about to say to you; understand simply that life has at times cruel necessities for the heart, but that we must submit to them. You are good, and your heart has generosities unknown to many women, who perhaps despise you and know not your value. But reflect, that, besides the mistress, there is the family; that besides love there are duties; that to the age of passions succeeds the age when the man, to be respected, requires to be firmly seated in a serious position. My son has no fortune, and yet he is ready to abandon to you the inheritance he derives from his mother. If he accepted from you the sacrifice you are on the point of making, he would be bound, both in honour and dignity, to make for you, in exchange, that provision which would place you for ever beyond complete adversity. But this sacrifice he cannot accept, because the world, which does not know you, would give to this consent a dishonest motive, which

ought not to sully the name we bear. It will not inquire if Armand loves you—if you love him—if this mutual love is a happiness for him and a re-establishment for you; it will see but one thing, that Armand Duval has suffered a courtesan—pardon me, my child, all that I am forced to say to you—to sell for him all she possessed. Then the day of reproaches and regrets will arrive, be sure of it, for you as for others, and you will both of you bear a chain that you will be unable to break. What will you then do? Your youth will be fled, the future of my son will be destroyed, and I, his father, shall have from only one of his children the comfort I had hoped for from both.

"You are young, you are handsome, life will console you; you are noble, and the remembrance of a good action will redeem for you many a past deed. During the six months he has known you, Armand has forgotten me. Four times I have written him, without his having a thought of once replying to me. I might even have died without his knowing it.

"Whatever may be your resolution to live otherwise than you have done, Armand, who loves you, will not consent to the seclusion to which his modest position will condemn you, and which is not made for your beauty. Who knows what he will do then? He has gambled—this I knew; without saying anything to you, I know it still: but, in a moment of madness, he might lose a portion of those savings which I have been making, for many years, as the dower of my daughter, for him, and for the tranquillity of my old age. What may happen once may happen twice.

"Are you sure, too, that the life you quit for him will not again attract you? Are you sure—you who have loved him—of not loving another? Lastly, will you not discover fetters which your connection will have placed on the life of your lover, and for which you will be unable to console him, perhaps, if, with age, ideas of ambition succeed to dreams of love? Reflect on all this, Madame. You love Armand; prove it by the only means that now remain to you—by offering to his future the sacrifice of your love. No harm is done as yet, but harm will come, and perhaps

greater than what I foresee. Armand may become jealous of a man who has loved you; he may provoke him—he may fight—he may be slain; and think what you will suffer at sight of that father, who will demand of you an account of his son's life.

"Lastly, my child, know all—for I have not told you all. Know, then, what has brought me to Paris. I have a daughter, as I have before mentioned, young, pretty, and pure as an angel. She loves; and she, too, has made of this love the dream of her life. I had written all this to Armand, but, wholly occupied with you, he has not replied to me. Well, my daughter is about to be married. She weds the man she loves; she enters into an honourable family, that expects all shall be honourable in mine. The family of the man who is to become my son-in-law have learned how Armand is living at Paris, and have declared to me that they must withdraw their pledge if Armand continues his present life. The future of a young girl who has done nothing to you, and who has a right to count upon the future, is in your hands.

"Have you the right, and do you feel the strength, to ruin it? In the name of your love and of your repentance, Marguerite, accord to me the happiness of my daughter."

I wept silently, my friend, before all these reflections, which I had made very often, and which, in the mouth of your father, acquired again a more serious reality. I told myself all that your father hesitated to tell me, though, for twenty times, it had come upon his lips, that I was, after all, but a girl under protection, and that whatever reason I might offer for our *liaison*, it would always have the air of a calculation; that my past life gave me no right to dream of such a future; and that I had accepted responsibilities, to which my habits and my reputation gave no guarantee whatever. At length I loved you, Armand. The paternal manner in which M. Duval spoke to me, the chaste feeling which he invoked in me, the esteem of this loyal old man, whom I was about to conquer, yours, which I was sure of having later,—all this awoke in my heart noble thoughts, which elevated me in my own eyes,

and caused holy vanities to speak within me, unknown up to that time. When I remembered that some day this old man, who had implored of me the future of his son, would tell his daughter to mix my name in her prayers, like the name of a mysterious friend, I transformed myself, and I was proud of myself.

The exaltation of the moment exaggerated, perhaps, the truth of these impressions; but that is what I experienced, and these new feelings silenced those thoughts which brought me the remembrance of the happy days passed with you

"Very well, Monsieur," said I to your father, drying my tears, "do you believe that I love your son?"

"Yes," said M. Duval.

"With a disinterested love?"

"Yes."

"Do you believe that I had made of this affection the hope, the dream, and the pardon of my life?"

"Firmly."

"Well, Monsieur, embrace me once as you would embrace your daughter, and I swear to you that that kiss, the sole really chaste one which I have received, will make me strong against my love, and that before eight days your son will have returned to you, perhaps unhappy for some time, but cured for ever."

"You are a noble girl," replied your father, kissing me on the forehead, "and you attempt a thing of which God will keep an account; but I greatly fear that you will obtain nothing from my son."

"Oh, make yourself tranquil, Monsieur, he will hate me."

It was necessary to have an impassable barrier between us, for the one as for the other.

I wrote to Prudence that I accepted the propositions of the Count de N——, and that she was to go and say to him that I would sup with her and him.

I sealed the letter, and, without telling him what it contained, I prayed your father to have it delivered at its address on arriving at Paris.

He, nevertheless, asked me what it contained.

"The happiness of your son," I answered. Your father embraced me for the last time. I felt upon my forehead two tears of gratitude, which were like the baptism of my past faults, and at the moment when I had just consented to give myself up to another man, I glowed with pride, on thinking of what I redeemed by this new sin.

It was very natural, Armand; you had told me that your father was the most honest man one could imagine.

M. Duval re-entered the carriage and went away.

Nevertheless, I was a woman, and when I again saw you, I could not prevent myself from crying, but I did not falter.

Have I done right? That is what I ask myself to-day, when, in illness, I take to a bed which I shall not perhaps leave alive.

You were a witness of what I suffered as the hour approached for our inevitable separation; your father was no longer there to support me, and there was a moment when I was very near avowing all to you, so much was I overpowered with the idea that you were about to hate and despise me.

One thing which you will not, perhaps, believe, Armand, is that I prayed to God to give me strength; and that He accepted my sacrifice, is proved by His granting me that strength which I implored.

At that supper, I still required assistance; I dared not think upon what I was about to do, so much did I fear my courage would fail me.

Who would have believed that I, Marguerite Gautier, should suffer so much at the single thought of a new lover.

I drank freely, in order to forget, and when I awoke the next day, I was in the Count's bed.

There is the entire truth, friend; judge and pardon me, as I have pardoned you all the evil which you have done me since that day.

CHAPTER XXVI.

What followed that fatal night, you know as well as I do; but that which you do not know, which you could have no suspicion of, is what I have suffered since our separation.

I had learned that your father had taken you away, but I very much doubted whether you could live long far from me, and on the day when I encountered you in the Champs Elysées, I was moved, but not astonished.

Then commenced that series of days of which each one brought me a new insult from you, an insult which I received almost with joy; because, besides the proof which it furnished that you still loved me, it appeared to me that the more you persecuted me, the higher I should be raised in your eyes, when you knew the whole truth.

Do not be astonished at this joyous martyrdom, Armand; the love which you had for me had opened my heart to noble enthusiasm.

However, I was not so strong very suddenly. Between the execution of the sacrifice which I had made and your return, a long enough space of time had elapsed, during which I found it necessary to have recourse to physical means, in order not to become mad, and to enable me to harden myself to the life I had entered upon. Prudence has told you—has she not?—that I was present at every fête, at all the balls, at all the orgies.

I hoped to kill myself rapidly by means of excesses, and I believe this wish will ere long be realised. My health necessarily altered for the worse, and on the day when I sent Madame Duvernoy to ask your pardon, I was exhausted both bodily and mentally.

I do not remind you, Armand, in what manner you recompensed the last proof of love which I gave to you, and by what outrage you drove from Paris the woman, who, dying, was not able to resist your voice; you asked of her

a night of love, and she, like a mad person, believed for an instant that she could re-unite the past and the present. You had the right to do what you have done. Armand, I have not always had my nights paid for so dearly!

I left everything then! Olympia replaced with me M. de N——, and undertook, I have been told, to let him know the motive of my departure. The Count de G—— was in London. He is one of those men, who, giving to love with girls like myself but just enough importance to enable him to pass his time agreeably, remain the friends of those women with whom they have had to do, and have no hatred, never having been jealous; he is, in fact, one of those great lords who open to us but one side of their heart, but who open to us both sides of their purse. I thought of him directly. I went to rejoin him. He received me charmingly, but he was the lover over there of a lady in society, and feared to compromise himself by appearing in public with me. He presented me to his friends, who gave me a supper, after which one of them took me home with him.

What would you have had me do, my friend?

Kill myself? This would have been to charge upon your life, which ought to be happy, a useless remorse; besides, what is the good of killing one's-self when one is so near dying?

I passed into that state of body without soul, of a thing without thought. For some time I lived this automaton-like life; then I returned to Paris and inquired after you; I there learned that you had gone away an a long voyage. Nothing could sustain me any longer. My existence again became what it had been two years before I had known you. I attempted to win back the Duke, but I had wounded this man too deeply, and old men are not patient, doubtless because they perceive that they are not eternal. Disease gained upon me day by day—I was pale, I was sad, I was still thinner. Those men who buy love, examine the merchandise before selecting it. There were in Paris women in better health, gayer and stouter than I; I was forgotten a little. There is the past up to to-day.

Now I am altogether ill. I have written to the Duke to ask money of him, for I have none, and my creditors bring in their bills with pitiless avidity. Will the Duke answer me? Why are you not in Paris, Armand? you would come to see me, and your visits would console me.

20th December.

It is horrible weather—it snows—I am alone at home. Since three days, I have been seized with such a fever, that I have not been able to write a word to you. Nothing new, my friend; each day I vaguely hope for a letter from you, but one does not come, and perhaps never will come. Men only have the strength not to pardon. The Duke has not answered me.

Prudence has recommenced her journeys to the pawnbroker's.

I never cease to spit blood. Oh, you would be pained if you were to see me. You are very lucky in being under a hot sky, and in not having a whole winter of ice weighing upon your chest. To-day I got up a little, and, from behind the blinds of my window, I saw pass to and fro that Paris life with which I feel I have altogether broken off. A few acquaintances passed along the street, rapidly, joyously, indifferently. Not one raised his eyes to my windows. However, a few young people called to inquire after me. Already once, I was ill, and you, who knew me not, who had obtained nothing from me but impertinence on the day when I saw you for the first time, you came to ask after me every morning. Here am I, ill again. We have passed six months together. I have had for you as much love as the heart of woman can contain and give, and you are far away; you detest me, and not a word of consolation comes to me from you. But it is chance alone, which is the cause of this abandonment—I am certain of it, for if you were in Paris, you would not leave my bedside and my room.

25th December.

My doctor forbids me to write every day. In fact, my

recollections only augment the fever; but yesterday, I received a letter which has done me good, more from the feelings which it expressed, than the material succour which it brought me. I can, therefore, write to you today. This letter was from your father, and here is what it contained:—

"MADAME.—I have this moment learnt that you are ill. If I were in Paris, I would myself hasten to inquire after you; if my son were near me I would beg of him to go; but I cannot leave C——, and Armand is six or seven hundred leagues away from here. Permit me, therefore, Madame, to write to you, and say how much I am pained by this illness; and believe in the sincere wishes which I express for your prompt recovery.

"One of my best friends, M. H——, will present himself at your house; be good enough to receive him. He is charged by me with a commission, of which I impatiently await the result.

"Accept, Madame," &c.

Such is the letter which I received. Your father has a noble heart; love him well, my friend; for there are few men in the world so well worthy of being loved. This paper, signed with his name, has done me more good than all the ordonnances of our great doctor.

This morning, M. H—— came. He appeared much embarrassed with the delicate mission with which M. Duval had charged him. He came to bring me a thousand crowns on the part of your father. I wished to refuse these at first, but M. H—— told me that this refusal would offend M. Duval, who had authorised him to give me this sum now, and to supply me with all that I might want afterwards. I accepted this service, which on the part of your father could not be a charity. If I am dead when you return, show your father what I have just written respecting him, and say that when tracing these lines, the poor girl to whom he wrote that consoling letter, shed tears of gratitude, and prayed God for him.

4th January.

I have just passed a number of very painful days. I did not know that the body could suffer so much. Oh! my past life! I pay its penalty doubly at this moment.

I have had watchers beside me every night. I could not breathe. Delirium and this fearful cough have shared my wretched existence.

My dining-room is full of *bon-bons* and presents of all sorts, which my friends have brought me. There are among these, no doubt, some young men who hope that I may become their mistress hereafter. If they could see what illness has made of me, they would fly from me in alarm.

Prudence makes *her* new year's presents with those which I have received.

The weather is fine and frosty; and the doctor tells me that I may go out in a few days, if the fine weather continues.

8th January.

I went out yesterday in my carriage. The weather was magnificent, and the Champs Elysées crowded. It seemed like the first smile of spring. Everything around me appeared to wear the aspect of a festival. I had never imagined the existence in a ray of sunshine of all that I found in it yesterday of joy, of sweetness, and of consolation.

I met nearly the whole of my acquaintances—gay as usual, and occupied as usual with their pleasures. How many are happy and know it not! Olympia passed me in an elegant carriage, which M. de N—— has given her. She sought to insult me by her looks. She does not know how far I am from feeling such trifles. A good-hearted young fellow, whom I have known for a long time, asked me if I would come and sup with him and one of his friends, who he said was very anxious to make my acquaintance.

I could but smile sadly, and offer him my hand burning with fever. I never saw a countenance express more astonishment than his.

I came home at four o'clock, and dined with some appetite.

This drive has done me good.

If I should be about to recover!

How the aspect of the life and happiness of others makes those desire to live, who, perhaps, only the day before, in the solitude of their souls and in the gloom of the sick-chamber, wished for speedy death!

10th January.

My hope of returning health was only a dream. I am once more in my bed, and my chest covered with cataplasms. Let me now make an offer of this person, upon which so high a value was once placed, and see at what it would be valued now.

It must be either that we have done a great deal of wrong before our birth, or because we are to enjoy great happiness after our death, that Heaven permits this life to possess all the tortures of an expiation, and all the pains of an ordeal.

12th January.

I continue to suffer.

The Count de N—— sent me some money yesterday, but I did not accept it. I want nothing from that man. He is the cause of your not being now near me.

Oh! our pleasant days at Bougival, where are they?

If ever I leave this room alive, I will make a pilgrimage to the house in which we lived together; but I shall never go from it again until I am dead.

Who knows if I shall even write to you to-morrow?

25th January.

For eleven nights I have not slept; I have been suffocated, and have believed at each moment that I was about to die. The doctor forbade them to let me touch a pen. Julie Duprat, who watches beside me, permits me, nevertheless, to write you these few lines. Will you not return before I die? Is all indeed for ever ended between us? It seems to me that if you were to come, I should recover. But why recover? To what purpose?

28th January.

This morning I was awoke early by a great noise. Julie, who slept in my chamber, rushed into the dining-room. I heard the voices of men, against which hers seemed to struggle in vain. She returned weeping.

The officers had come to make a seizure. I told her to let them accomplish that which they termed justice. The bailiff entered my room with his hat on his head, opened all my drawers, made an inventory of everything he could see, and did not appear even to observe that there was a dying woman on the bed, which fortunately the mercy of the law spares me.

He condescended to say, as he went away, that I could enter an opposition within nine days, but he left a man in possession! What is to become of me? This scene has aggravated my malady. Prudence wished to ask your father's friend for some money, but I would not permit it.

30th January.

I received your letter this morning. I needed it. Will my reply reach you in time? Shall you see me again? The happiness of this day has made me forget all that I have undergone during the last six weeks. I seem to be better, despite the feeling of sadness under the impression of which I have replied to you.

After all, we cannot surely be always unhappy.

Then I think that it is possible that I may not die; that you may return; that I shall once more see the spring; that you may still love me; and that we may re-commence our life of the past year.

Insanity! It is with difficulty that I can hold the pen with which I write to you this wild dream of my imagination.

Whatever happens, I love you truly, Armand, and I should have died long since, had I not been sustained by the remembrance of our love and a sort of vague hope of once more seeing you beside me.

4th February.

The Count de G—— has returned. His mistress has played him false. He is very sad; he was very fond of her. He came to tell me all this. The poor fellow is embarrassed in his circumstances; but this did not prevent him from paying the officer, and dismissing the man in possession. I spoke to him of you, and he promised to speak to you of me. I forgot at that moment that I had ever been his mistress, and he sought to make me forget it. He is a noble-hearted fellow.

The Duke sent to ask after me, yesterday, and he called himself this morning. I cannot understand what it is that keeps the old man alive. He remained for three hours near me without saying twenty words. He shed tears when he was me so pale. The remembrance of the death of his daughter affected him, no doubt. He will have seen her die twice. His frame is bowed, his head leans, his lips hang down, and his eye is dim. Age and grief press with double weight upon his exhausted body. He has not uttered a single reproach. It would almost seem as if he was gratified to see the ravage which disease has made in me. He seemed proud to be still in health, while I, so young, am crushed by suffering.

The bad weather has returned. No one comes to see me. Julie stays with one as much as she can. Prudence, to whom I can no longer give so much money as formerly, begins to find pretexts of business for staying away.

Now that I am about to die—in spite of what the doctors have promised me, for I have several, which proves that I am worse—I almost regret having listened to your father. If I had known that I should have occupied but one year of your life, I could never have resisted the desire to pass that year with you, and at least I should have died clasping the hand of a friend. It is true, nevertheless, that if we had passed this year together, I should not have died so soon.

Heaven's will be done!

5th February.

Oh! come—come, Armand! I suffer horribly; I am about to die! I was so sad yesterday, that I wished to

pass anywhere but at home the evening which threatened to be as long as the preceding. The Duke came in the morning. It seems as if the sight of this old man, whom death has forgotten, will only make me die the sooner!

Despite the fever which consumed me, I caused myself to be dressed and driven to the Vaudeville Theatre. Julie put some rouge upon my cheeks, or I should have looked like a corpse. I went to the very box at which I fixed our first rendezvous; and I kept my eyes fixed upon the stall which you occupied on that night, and which was filled last evening by a sort of country youth, who laughed loudly at all the nonsense uttered by the actors. . . . They brought me home half dead. I coughed and raised blood all night. To-day I am unable to speak, and can hardly raise my hand. Oh! Heaven, I am about to die! I expected it, certainly, but I cannot reconcile myself to the idea of suffering more than I now suffer, and if . . ."

From this word the few characters which Marguerite had essayed to trace were illegible, and it was Julie Duprat who had continued the narrative.

18th February.

Monsieur Armand,—From the day when Marguerite would go to the theatre, she continued to grow worse. She entirely lost her voice, and afterwards the use of her limbs. What our poor friend suffers, it is impossible to describe. I am not accustomed to these sort of scenes, and I suffer from constant alarm.

How I wish that you were with us! She is almost always delirious, but delirious or sane, it is always your name which she pronounces when she succeeds in uttering a word.

The physician tells me that she cannot live long. Since she has become so very ill, the old Duke has not been again. He told the doctor that the sight was too painful for him.

Madame Duvernoy does not behave well. This woman, who thought to obtain more money from Mar-

guerite, at whose expense she almost entirely lived, has assumed liabilities which she is unable to meet, and seeing that Marguerite can be of no more use to her, she does not even continue to visit her. Every one abandons her. M. de G——, embarrassed by his debts, has been obliged to return to London. On leaving he sent us some money. He did all that he could, but a fresh seizure has been made, and the creditors await only her death in order to sell the things.

I wished to use what remained of my own means to prevent these seizures, but the officer told me that it was useless, for he had other judgments against Marguerite. Since she is to die, it is better to abandon everything, than to save it for her family, who have not chosen to visit her, and who have never loved her. You cannot conceive the gilded misery amid which the poor girl is dying. Yesterday we had no money. Plate, jewellery, shawls, all are in pledge; and everything else is sold or seized. Marguerite is still conscious of what passes around her, and suffers in mind no less than in body. Large tears roll down her cheeks, so pale and thin that if you could see her, you would no longer recognise the face of her whom you loved so much. She made me promise to write to you when she should no longer be able to do so, and I write in her presence. She looks towards me, but is unable to see me. Her sight is already dimmed by the approach of death. But she smiles, and all her thoughts and her whole soul are with you, I am certain.

Each time that the door opens, her eyes brighten, and she believes that it is you who are about to enter; but when she sees that it is *not* you, her countenance resumes its expression of pain, her cheeks are moistened with a cold perspiration, and become purple.

19th February, Midnight.

This has been a sad day, my poor Monsieur Armand! This morning Marguerite was unable to breathe, the doctor bled her, and her voice has returned a little. The doctor has counselled her to see a priest. She said that she

would consent to it, and he went himself to call an abbé at Saint Roch.

During this time, Marguerite called me to her bedside, asked me to open her wardrobe, pointed out a cap to me, a long chemise quite covered with lace, and said to me in an enfeebled voice,

"I am going to die after having confessed; then you will dress me with those things: it is the caprice of a dying person."

She then embraced me crying, and added,

"I can speak, but I choke too much when I speak. I choke! give me air!"

I fell into tears; I opened the window, and a few minutes after the priest entered.

I went to meet him.

When he knew at whose house he was, he seemed to fear to be badly received.

"Enter without fear, my father," I said.

He remained but a short time in the sick chamber, and he left it, saying to me,

"She has lived as a sinner, but she will die as a Christian."

A little while after he returned, accompanied by a chorister who carried a crucifix, and preceded by a sacristan, ringing a bell to announce that the sacrament was being borne to a dying person.

They all three entered this bed-room, which had previously echoed so many strange words, and which was at this hour but a holy tabernacle.

I fell upon my knees. I do not know how long the impression lasted which this spectacle produced upon me, but I do not believe that until I reach the same moment, any human thing can affect me so much.

The priest anointed with holy oil the feet, the hands and the forehead of the dying person, and Marguerite found herself ready to leave for heaven, where she will doubtless go, if God has seen the trials of her life and the holiness of her death.

From that time she has not spoken a word, and has

not made a movement. Twenty times I should have believed her dead, if I had not heard her respire with effort.

26th February, five o'clock, P.M.

All is over.

It became evident about two o'clock this afternoon, that Marguerite was dying. Never did a martyr suffer such tortures, to judge by the cries which she uttered. Two or three times she got straight up in the bed, as if she wished to re-seize her life which was mounting towards God.

Two or three times also, she breathed your name, then everything was silent, she fell down exhausted upon her bed. Two silent tears coursed down from her eyes, and she died.

Then I approached her, I called her, and as she did not answer me, I closed her eyes, and I kissed her upon the forehead.

Poor dear Marguerite, I should have wished to have been a holy woman, so that that kiss might recommend you to God.

Then I dressed her as she had prayed me to do ; I went to find a priest at Saint Roch ; I burned two wax tapers for her, and I prayed during an hour in the church.

I gave some money to the poor for her.

I do not know much about religion, but I believe that Heaven will know that my tears were true, my prayer fervent, my alms sincere, and that it will have pity on her, who dying young and lovely, had but me to close her eyes and to wrap her in her shroud.

22nd February.

To-day the funeral took place. A great many of Marguerite's female friends came to the church. Some shed tears with sincerity. When the procession took the road to Montmartre, two men only followed the hearse, the Count de G——, who had returned from London expressly, and the Duke, who walked supported by two footmen.

It is from her house that I write you all these details, in the midst of my tears, and before the lamp which burns dimly near to a dinner which I do not touch, as you may well believe, but which Nanine caused to be fetched for me, for I have not eaten for more than twenty-four hours.

My life cannot retain these sad impressions, because my life does not belong to me any more than Marguerite's belonged to her; that is why I give you all these details upon the spot itself where they transpired, in the fear that if a long space of time should elapse between them and your return, I should not be able to give them to you in all their sad exactitude.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"You have read it?" said Armand to me, when I had finished the perusal of the manuscript.

"I understand what you must have suffered, my friend, if all this be true."

"My father confirmed it in a letter."

We conversed for some time longer upon the sad destiny which had been thus accomplished, and I returned home to take a little rest.

Armand, still sad, but solaced somewhat by the recital of this narrative, recovered rapidly, and we went together to visit Prudence and Julie Duprat.

Prudence had just become bankrupt. She told us that Marguerite was the cause of it; for that, during her illness, she had lent her a great deal of money, in place of which she had herself given bills that she could not pay, Marguerite being dead without having repaid her, and not having given her any receipts, to enable her to make a claim as a creditor.

By means of this fable, which Madame Duvernoy re-

counted everywhere, she succeeded in drawing a note of 1,000 francs from Armand, who did not believe it, but who preferred appearing to do so, so great was his respect for everything that had even approached his mistress.

Afterwards we went to Julie Duprat, who narrated to us the sad scenes of which she had been a witness, shedding tears of sincere regret to the memory of her friend.

Finally, we went to Marguerite's grave, upon which the early rays of the April sun had already caused the first leaves to open.

There remained another duty for Armand to perform—that of visiting his father. He still wished me to accompany him.

We arrived at C——, where I found M. Duval such as I had recognised him after the portrait drawn by his son—tall, dignified, and benevolent.

He welcomed Armand with tears of happiness, and shook me affectionately by the hand. I soon perceived that the paternal sentiment was the governing one in the breast of the good man.

His daughter, named Blanche, had that transparency of glance and that serenity of smile which prove that the soul only imagines holy thoughts, and that the lips only utter pious words. She smiled at the return of her brother—unaware, the chaste, young girl, that far away, a poor courtesan had sacrified her happiness on the mere invocation of her name.

I remained for a time with this happy family, who were wholly occupied with him who was thus restored to them.

I returned to Paris, where I wrote this history, as it had been narrated to me. It has but one merit, and that one which will perhaps be disputed—*that of being true.*

I do not draw from this story the conclusion that all girls like Marguerite are capable of doing what she did—far from it; but I had learned that one of them had felt, during her life, a real love, that she had suffered from it, and that she had died in consequence of it. I have told the reader what I had thus learned. It was a duty.

I am not the apostle of vice, but I will make myself the echo of a noble misfortune wherever I hear its voice.

The history of Marguerite is exceptional, I repeat; if it had formed the rule, it would not have been worth the trouble of writing.

Edinburgh, August 188

THE END.

W. C. CHRISTIE
BOOKSELLER
92, NICOLSON ST. EDINBURGH.

CLARKE'S

STANDARD NOVEL LIBRARY,

(The Best Works by the Best Authors.)

NEW EDITIONS, POST 8vo, PICTURE BOARDS, PRICE 2s.

—o—

BY W. STEPHENS HAYWARD

(Author of "The Black Angel.")

THE BLACK ANGEL.
THE STAR OF THE SOUTH.
THE FIERY CROSS.
THE REBEL PRIVATEER.
LOVE'S TREASON; or, the Vendetta and the Avenger.
TOM HOLT'S LOG.
LORD SCATTERBRAIN.
WILD AN[illegible] WONDE[illegible]FUL.
THE DEMONS OF THE SEA.
RODNEY RAY; or, the Life and Adventures of a Scapegrace.
LOVE AND ADVENTURE.
THE CLOUD KING; or, Up in the Air and Down in the Sea.
TEN YEARS A ROVER.
RAN AWAY FROM HOME.
MILDRED'S CROSS: or, the High Road to Ruin.

THE MUTINY OF THE THUNDER.
THE GOLDEN REEF; or, a Dive for Half-a-Million.
DOCTOR ANDREW LORRIMER.
IDOL'S EYE.

LONDON:

CHARLES HENRY CLARKE, 9, ST. BRIDES' AVENUE, FLEET STREET.